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# DRAMAS OF LIFE







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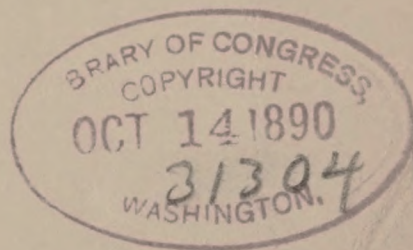
BY

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"TALES OF TO-DAY," "LIGHTS O' LONDON," "THREE BLACK BALLS,"  
ETC, ETC.

*Authorized Edition*



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# DRAMAS OF LIFE.

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## THE MILLIONAIRE'S SECRET.

“ARE you all right, Bill?”

“Yes, Jack, it's a big drop—take care.” One man stood on one side of a high wall, and spoke to the other man who was on the other side. The big wall marked the extent of the grounds of Colston Hall, Surrey, the residence of Thomas Smith, Esq., J. P., the richest man in the county.

The time was two o'clock in the morning. The two gentlemen who were conversing were housebreakers, Messrs. William Hicks and John Gorman, both renowned in their profession as old and experienced hands, and credited with having been concerned in some of the biggest burglaries of the past five years. Both had done what is technically known as “time.” Mr. Hicks had been compelled to retire from business for five, and Mr. Gorman for seven years, but these are little drawbacks inseparable from the profession, and in all professions you must take the rough with the smooth.

Punishment is, I believe, commonly supposed to have a deterrent effect on crime. The only punishment that is absolutely deterrent is capital punishment. No murderer who has been hanged has ever been known to repeat his offence. All other punishments are simply deterrent during the time they are in force. The loss of their liberty seems to be accepted by the criminal classes much as the gambling classes accept the loss of their



money. They have played the game and they must pay the stake. The stake paid, the next thing is to play the game again, and see if fortune won't be more favorable. It is very seldom you pick up the daily paper without reading of the old lady who has been a "hundred times convicted," of the middle-aged man who has spent twenty years out of his forty-five in prison—of the thief who has performed such a variety of sentences, of from three months to two years, that the judge gives him five years as a "steadier," and promises him seven if at the end of that period he renews his acquaintance. No sooner does the now familiar head-line, "The Burglary Season," appear in the newspapers, as the days shorten, than a host of the professors of the midnight art appear at the bar of public justice, and in two-thirds of the cases, when it comes to the sentence, the judge is informed that there are "several previous convictions" against the prisoner. After many years' careful study of the criminal classes, I have come to the conclusion that they do not object to prison life at all, especially in bad times, when good jobs are scarce—that the only thing which prompts thieves to run away, and burglars to shoot policemen is the hereditary instinct of self-preservation. Heredity has much more to do with the manners and customs of the criminal classes than reason or a careful computation of chances.

Messrs. William Hicks and John Gorman, the two burglars now making their way cautiously across the grounds of Thomas Smith, Esq., J.P., towards the mansion, were hereditary criminals—good, sound, straightforward representatives of their class. I have no doubt that both of them would have considered, had they attended an adult Sunday-school, and been initiated late in life into the accepted catechism of the Church, that as burglars they "did their duty in that station of life unto which it had pleased God to call them," and they would have explained that they considered it their duty, as



respectable and decent burglars of the higher class, not to knock the inmates of a house about if they didn't interfere—not to shoot or bludgeon a policeman unless he gave chase to them, and not to peach on the pals that got away if they themselves were caught. Herein consists—I was gravely assured once, by a retired member of the craft whom I had the pleasure of meeting at a free-and-easy concert, given for the benefit of a burglar's widow and family—"the whole duty of a housebreaker who respects himself."

Messrs. William Hicks and John Gorman respected themselves, and they had arranged the attack on the mansion of the J.P. with strict attention to the rules of the game. The dog had been duly "got at"—a male servant sleeping in the house had been arranged with—Mr. Gorman himself dressed in his Sunday broadcloth, had duly taken stock of the position of the various rooms, staircases, etc., while explaining to the house-keeper the inestimable advantage of the new patent gas consuming burners which save 50 per cent. in gas and are never known to black a ceiling. The enterprising traveller in the new patent gas burners had begged to be allowed to fit one or two to the chandeliers and gas brackets, and, although not allowed to carry out his desire of fixing them in every room on approval, he had managed to see nearly all he wanted to while engaging the elderly lady in conversation. He fitted one on to the knight in armor holding a lamp up on the lower landing, with extraordinary dexterity, and was up the second flight and on the bedroom floor before the old lady had time to say "That'll do, thank you. I'll see how these answer first." Then he had presented her with a card of the firm he represented (it was a genuine firm's card which he had obtained), and left, perfectly satisfied that the burners he had fitted on would not lead to any further correspondence with the aforesaid house of



business. Mr. William Hicks, Mr. Gorman's usual companion in big jobs requiring nerve, skill, coolness and address, left all these preliminaries to his partner with confidence. He was not a Londoner, and he lacked the commercial stamp of respectability. He was a countryman born and bred, hailing from a picturesque village in the neighborhood of Sheffield, where his youth and early manhood had been passed in acquiring local fame. But after bringing off the biggest burglary ever known in the county of Yorkshire, Bill came up to London, feeling that the great Metropolis would offer an extensive field more worthy of his talents. He was also induced to abandon his county by the fact that the local police on his release from prison so far forgot that fairness which is the first element in British justice as to follow him about, spy upon him, and generally to hamper his arrangements for future business.

The reader having now been properly introduced to Messrs. Hicks and Gorman, will feel at greater liberty to accompany them on their visit to the mansion of Thomas Smith, Esq., J. P.

Cautiously picking their way over the grass-plots and the flower-beds, and carefully avoiding the gravel paths, probably with a polite desire not to disturb any of the sleeping inmates, the two men, all the necessary implements of their trade in their capacious side-pockets, stole softly round to the back part of the mansion where their entrance was to be effected.

Everything was propitious—the moon was faithful to the calculations they had made by the aid of the calendar, and remained in seclusion; the little ladder was hidden cautiously in the shrubbery, just where they would have wished it to be, and when, climbing gently up it, they reached the window they had selected as the weak point in the enemy's defence, they had only to cut a pane of the outer glass away, and then two shutters yielded to a



little gentle pressure and swung noiselessly back. A few more delicate operations, and then through the now open window went Mr. Hicks, followed carefully by his friend, Mr. Gorman. Their india-rubber shoes fell noiselessly alike on stone and carpet, their dark lanterns carefully manipulated, yielded just the faint gleams of light they needed, and so they stole noiselessly towards the room in which the plate was secured. Just then, while they were giving a passing glance round the dining-room, where some massive silver salvers generally stood on the side-board, and might have been left out, as sometimes happened, they heard a sound above them, a creaking on the stairs, and through the crack of the door they saw an advancing light. Instantly both men's hands sought their breast pockets. One man drew a revolver, the other a heavy life-preserver. It was too late to retreat; the only thing was to wait. Nearer came the heavy, creaking footsteps; broader grew the ray of light, and then the door opened, and a big, burly gentleman, with a cigar in his mouth, and a candle in his hand, strolled carelessly into the room.

"I must have dropped the blessed thing here," he muttered to himself, peering about the room. As he had come in he had pushed the dining-room door open. It swung slowly back on its hinges, and screened from view the two burglars, who, silent and motionless, crouched against the wall, ready to spring on the intruder at the first cry of alarm.

The proprietor of the mansion—for it was he—went straight to the mantleshef and felt up and down that, then he looked on the table. "Confound it," he growled; "this comes of flashing thousand pound notes about, just to astonish that booby of a parson, who said he'd never seen one in his life. I know I had ten in my pocket—there are only nine now: so I must have dropped one."

Mr. Smith, J. P., had been smoking and reading up in



his bedroom till a late hour, and prior to going to bed turned his pockets out on the table, and found that the bundle of thousand pound notes, which he had been "flashing," as he vividly expressed it, was one short. He supposed he must have dropped it in the dining-room, hence his small-hour expedition to the lower regions.

"It's not here," he said, "perhaps I've counted the notes wrong." He pulled them out of his trouser's pocket, into which he had thrust them in his bedroom, and counted them again, "one—two—three—four—no, four—five—" two of the notes were stuck together, "six—seven—eight—nine—ten. Ten thousand pounds. Hang it, they are right after all."

Ten thousand pounds in one man's hand, and that man alone in the room with two armed burglars! The same thought flashed simultaneously through the brain of Mr. Hicks and Mr. Gorman.

The wealthy J. P., the man whose riches were said to be fabulous, the man whose vast fortune accumulated by speculations in Australia, turned to leave the dining-room candle in hand. Whiff! What was that? A current of air, a sudden draught. His candle had gone out!

Only half the oath he meant to utter left the J. P.'s lips. In a moment a pair of coarse, huge hands had him by the throat, choking the breath out of him, while another pair of hands were thrust into his pockets and clutched the bundle of notes.

For a second the iron grip was relaxed. Perhaps the gripper thought he was gripping too hard, and he didn't want to murder his victim—he only wanted to silence and rob him. But the relaxation was a mistake, for in that second the burglar found himself seized by two powerful arms, a leg was dexterously twisted round his, and he was hurled to the ground, while a fierce voice poured out a torrent of oaths in the broadest Sheffield dialect.



“By God,” exclaimed Bill Hicks, as he struggled to his feet, while his companion, recovering from his astonishment, clapped his hand across the J. P.’s mouth, “there’s only one man I ever knew as could wrestle like that and throw me, and if it ain’t him, it’s his (strong word) ghost.”

Instantly the burglar, forgetting his caution in his excitement, opened his dark lantern, and flashed it full on the man who was struggling violently with Jack Gorman, gripping his wrists in a vice so that he could not raise a hand to use his bludgeon. As the light fell on the face of the owner of Colston Hall, Bill Hicks cried, “I thought so. Tom Smith, o’ Sheffield, by all that’s wonderful!”

In a moment the face of the Australian millionaire, which had been crimson with rage and suffocation, turned a deadly white. He cast a fierce, penetrating look at the burglar, and then he shivered from head to foot.

“Let him be, Jack,” said Bill Hicks, quietly. “He won’t make a row now. We’re old pals, ain’t we, Tom?”

Still the millionaire never moved his lips. He stood like a man stupefied; like a man at whose feet a thunder-bolt had fallen.

“Come on, Jack,” exclaimed Mr. Hicks to his astonished companion, who stood open-mouthed, wondering if he was awake or sleeping off the effects of a big drinking bout, and passing through one of the accompanying nightmares; “come on, Jack; my old pal, Tom Smith, won’t round on us, will you, Tom? Lor’, it’s like old times seeing you again, Tom, and *it brings back old times, too*—lots o’ things as I’d forgotten, a’most. We’ll only borrow them flimsies, Tom, and pay you back one day, unless you think you’d like to give ’em us for the sake o’ old times. Don’t trouble to see us to the front door; we’ll go out the way we come, and perhaps you’ll shut the shutters arter us, and if they tell you to-morrow as there’s a window with a pane broke, you may as well



say you did it yourself, accidental. It'll save some stupid fool goin' and stuffing the police up as burglars has been givin' you a look in. Good-night, Tom. What, you won't shake hands, won't you? Lor'! Fancy *you* havin' a lot of dirty pride about you. But there it's allers the way with coves as gets up in the world. Me and Jack won't be proud, though we've made ten thousand pounds atween us by our night's work. Come on, Jack. Good evenin', Tom. I aint got a card with me, but I'll drop you a line to-morrow, saying where you can see me again if you'd like to have a chat over old times, arter all. Good-night."

Messrs. Hicks and Gorman walked quietly out, and closed the door after them, leaving the millionaire alone in the darkness.

As the door closed he gave a smothered cry, and then fell on his knees, and buried his head in his hands.

"My God! my God!" he cried. "My sin has found me out at last!"

Three days later Thomas Smith, Esq., J. P., of Colston Hall, was making his way on foot across Westminster Bridge. Arrived on the other side, he inquired of a policeman for a certain street, which he had written down on a piece of paper. Did the policeman know it? The policeman thought he did, rather. It was about the worst street in London. "You'd better look out for your watch and chain, sir, if you are going down there. Why, it's as full o' thieves as a egg is o' meat. It's all alleys and houses as you go in at one end and out o' the other, and I've heard as under some o' the houses is cellars as lead to the river. Many a poor devil has been lured down there of a night, sir, and never been heard of again, only a body found in the river, perhaps miles away, and supposed to have fallen in or drowned himself. Mind what you're about if you're going there, sir."



"I can take care of myself," answered the millionaire ;  
"tell me how to get to it."

The policeman directed him, and thanking the man he walked away.

The policeman looked after him. "What's his lay, I wonder? Well, I've told him what to expect. Suppose he knows his own business, and he looks as if he could take care of himself. He's big enough."

Mr. Thomas Smith reached the street in question, and he soon found the number of the house he was in search of. There was no fear of any of the inhabitants recognizing him, though they stared at him with a natural curiosity as to strangers begotten of suspicion.

He was admitted to the house directly he mentioned the name of Mr. Hicks, and told curtly "fust floor."

Up to the first floor he went, and found Mr. Hicks waiting for him on the landing—if the dirty rotten bit of flooring could be dignified with the name. It was a very shaky landing at the best—for the rails were broken away, having been used as firewood by the tenants, and there was a hole, where an entire plank had given way, quite large enough for a leg to go through.

"I don't live here, Tom," explained Mr. Hicks apologetically, "but I use the place for business, and I thought it would be better than you coming to my 'ouse. My old woman 'ud like to be introduced to you, but that'll do when we've moved into our new villa, as we're going to take as soon as you've made it all square and safe for me to change the flimsies at the Bank. I don't want to pay the usual discount to the trade for 'em, you know—as there ain't a-going to be no stopping and no advertising—is there, Tom?"

"That depends," replied the J. P. "Now, what is it you've got to say? Out with it, because I don't care particularly about the atmosphere of this place, and I've no time to waste."



"Right you are. Business only meant, as they say in the boxing challenges. I don't want much. I've got ten thou—half of that's Jack Gorman's. Lucky beast, Jack—but fair's fair. We was halves in the swag that night, and I won't go back on a bargain."

"What do you want?"

"Well, Tom, I ain't hardly had time to think. First, you won't try to stop them flimsies?"

"No——"

"That's all right. It would do you no good if you did, and it wouldn't be good for me—and the blarmed Jew fellows would get all the profit."

"I tell you I won't stop them. Is that all you want?"

"No. Five thou's a good bit, but a gent as I've consulted—a gent in the city, who does my legal business—tells me as it's only two hundred a year—if you don't spend it, but lends it to the government or the railways. Now, I'm getting tired of my line of business, and I'd like to settle down respectable, and do nothing for the rest o' my life except take the old woman out now and then of a Sunday, and keep a pony and trap. Will you make the two hundred pounds £500?"

"You mean will I make you an allowance of three hundred pounds a year?"

"That's about what I mean, I expect——"

"And what are you going to do in return?"

"Hold my tongue, Tom."

The millionaire hesitated a moment. He was thinking out the situation—weighing the pros and cons, in the business-like way of a man who had made millions by successful speculation—by knowing when to say *yes* and when to say *no*.

Mr. Hicks watched his face eagerly. "You ought not to take long to think about it, Tom," he said. "I didn't when I first heard your name that night, and saw your face, I didn't take long to see what a stroke o' luck I



tumbled on. "What," says I to myself, "This 'ere Smith, J.P., as lives in this grand 'All—as is so rich that everybody is a talking about him, is nobody else but my old pal Tom Smith, as once we were lads together, and many a spree we had, too. Tom as had the row with Jim Oldroyd, the keeper's son, about the pretty little girl Polly Thwaites, and one night, when he'd had a drop to drink, and was mad with jealousy, met Jim, and fought him—fought him fair, I dare say, if there'd been anybody to see it, only there wasn't—so it was jolly awkward for Tom, as Jim never went home that night, but was found lying in the wood, and carried home, and never spoke a word. And it was me and my mate, Joe Heslop—you remember Joe—I dare say I could find him if I tried—as came and told you they'd found Jim dying; and you said, 'My God, I've killed him.' And we told you to clear out quick, and get away to sea afore you got lagged and scragged. It was good advice, Tom; it must have been, seeing as you went to furrin' parts, and here you are after twenty years, come back busting with money, and you're a big swell, and nobody but me knows you're the Tom Smith, o' Sheffield, as killed Jim Oldroyd in a drunken passion, because he was sticking up to Polly Thwaites—and I was a good pal to you after that too, for I never breathed a word, and when it got put about that poor Jim had been killed by poachers as owed him and his father a grudge, I never said what I knowed, no more did Joe Heslop, as I might know where to find, for I heard of him not more than two years ago—and now you're up in the world, and a regular Baron Rothschild, and all through me advising you to get out of the country. I don't think you will be ungrateful and refuse me my bit, for hang it, I deserve it."

The rich man—the man whose name was respected for his wealth and his vast charities, for his business skill, and his high commercial position, bit his lip, and set his



teeth with nervous rage, as the disreputable companion of his vagabond, ill-spent youth coolly dragged up from the buried past the ghastly secret that had driven him from his native land. He had salved his conscience, as soon as he had developed one, again and again, with the thought that his fight with Jim Oldroyd was a fair one—that it had been blow for blow, until he caught Jim that terrific smash on the side of the head and felled him like a bullock, and then staggered away to sleep off his drunken fury, never thinking but that Jim would get up and crawl away home, crestfallen and humbled. But when he heard that Jim was dying he was terrified. There had been no witnesses to the fight. He himself had scarcely a mark or a bruise to show, for the fight had been all in his favor, and he had parried his less skilled antagonist's blows, and beyond a slight cut on his cheek, had nothing to show in his own favor, and so he ran away.

He had killed a man, and there was nothing to prove that he hadn't killed him wilfully out of revenge and jealousy. He did not bear a good character in the neighborhood; he was a rowdy and a roysterer, and his companions were as rowdy as himself. He had no relatives but an aunt, who disliked him and grumbled at him, and would be glad to get rid of him, and so he fled—fled from the justice which he believed would hand him over to the gallows.

And in twenty years he returned to England a millionaire—forgotten in his native village—giving himself out to have passed his whole life in Australia; asked no questions that his wealth did not answer, fully believing that no one would ever dream of coupling him with Tom Smith, the Sheffield lad. His aunt had been dead for years, his old companions would have forgotten him, and he was not likely to revisit his native village.

Always when he thought of the past, he comforted himself with the idea that it was a fair fight, and an



accident of the fight, that Oldroyd was fatally injured ; but now here was an old companion of his—a man who had become a professional burglar—a man who would find others to join him if necessary, in swearing that he killed Oldroyd, that he was a murderer who had run away to avoid arrest, a man who had murdered his rival, maddened by drink and jealousy.

And if this story were told of him, and if he were arrested, and the scandal spread, and he could refute it ! If he found people to believe that his statement was true—and it was a fair fight—what then ? Would not all his career be brought up against him ? Would not he, the millionaire, the Justice of the Peace, the patron of the benevolent institutions, the princely subscriber to Christian missions, the fêted and run-after Thomas Smith, Esq., stand confessed the former companion and associate of men who were now notorious criminals ? And his wife, his sons and his daughters, what shame would not they have to endure if this wretched story were made public—if he were denounced by this scoundrel, or by some one instructed by him, to the police, and arrested.

The Australian millionaire, the British Justice of the Peace, thought the whole matter out, and made up his mind.

“I accept your terms,” he said. “You can take your notes to the bank. You’ll let your ‘lawyer’ do it for you if you take my advice, and so long as you neither communicate with me or annoy me in any way, but keep your former knowledge of me absolutely to yourself, and prevent your companion from presuming on what he heard and witnessed at the Hall, I will pay to you, through my lawyers, the sum of Three Hundred Pounds a year. Send me the name of the lawyer who is going to take charge of your affairs, and mine shall communicate with him. Is that satisfactory ?”

“Quite,” replied Mr. Hicks. “Tom, you’re a brick,



and you can trust me to keep my mouth shut. I retire from business and become a respectable gent from this day."

Mr. Hicks held out his hand, Mr. Smith didn't notice it, said "Good-morning," and made his way out of the street and across Westminster Bridge as rapidly as he could.

That evening Mr. Gorman came to Mr. Hicks' residence to supper, and Mr. Gorman, quite satisfied that the "flimsies" could be dealt with at their full value over the counter of the Bank of England, agreed to leave the matter entirely in Mr. Hicks' hand to arrange, and thought that after all he might as well be respectable, too, and immediately began to look about for a little cottage in the country, where he might devote himself to horticulture generally, and rose-growing in particular, for Mr. Gorman had one weakness in his burglarious character, and that weakness was flowers. He had even been known to walk on a gravel path while trying to break into a house, rather than trample down a bed and injure the flowers. Such a delicate trait in the character of a man of Mr. Gorman's profession is worth making a note of when found.

Mr. Hicks congratulated himself on the fact that since his last sentence had expired—only very recently, it must be confessed—he had not succeeded in bringing off a job. This, which at one time he had resented as bad luck, he now confessed was quite the reverse, for there was nothing which the police could bring up against him, which would warrant them in depriving him temporarily of the enjoyment of the privileges of a gentleman of independent means, should they recognize in William Hicks, Esq., of Myrtle Villa, Sydenham, the once notorious crib cracker and ex-convict, known at Scotland Yard and among his intimates as "Bill the Gouger," on account of a little trick he once played with the visual organ of a too presumptuous policeman.



It should be recorded that Mr. Hicks fully carried out his intention of turning "respectable," and to-day he is a highly respected member of the Vigilance Committee of his district—a committee which has been formed for the suppression of everything that is wicked, and for the raising of the moral tone of the Vigilance Committee's neighbors. There is a rumor that Mr. Hicks stands a very fair chance of becoming churchwarden, but some of his supporters are not quite certain that the feathers which Mrs. Hicks wears in her hat when they drive to church on Sundays in the pony trap (the pony is a fast trotter) would be quite serious enough for a churchwarden's wife.

Thomas Smith, Esq., J. P., of Colston Hall, has quite recovered from the shock he experienced when a former acquaintance of his called upon him at such an unusual hour of the morning, and borrowed ten thousand pounds.

He is a great patron of nearly everything that wants money, and he is universally respected. He travels about a good deal, but he has never yet visited the neighborhood of Sheffield. From the hour he left his native village, which is about seven miles from that grimy centre of industry, he has never mentioned the fact that he knows that such a place exists. He has blotted it out of his memory. Most rich men like to know something of their old homes, and their old associations. Mr. Smith would as soon think of drawing his own teeth as a distraction, as of making inquiries about the home of his boyhood. It is always best to let sleeping dogs lie. If you don't they are apt to become very wide awake, and instead of lying to tell the truth. There are some truths which even a benevolent millionaire would rather the public were not favored with.



## THE MYSTERIOUS CROSSING SWEEPER.

SHE was an odd-looking little old woman, and she was busily engaged in sweeping the crossing at the top of my street when I first saw her.

My attention was attracted to her by the fact of her being where she was. I had lived in Gower Street for three years, I had crossed at that particular crossing almost every day during my residence in that gloomy thoroughfare, and I had naturally come to know the regular crossing sweeper. The regular crossing sweeper was an old man ; why had he suddenly resigned his position to the old woman ?

I had read some wonderful stories about crossing sweepers, who make fortunes and retire from business, about crossing sweepers who sell "the good will" of their crossing for a good round sum, and about crossing sweepers who leave their crossing to their relatives, just as other citizens leave their estates to theirs. Having these things in my mind, and being addicted to "making notes," I at once gave vent to my natural curiosity and asked the new crossing sweeper a few questions.

"Where's old Tom ?" I said, "how is it he's not here ?" The old lady looked up at me—as I thought—suspiciously.

"We've changed crossings," she said, quickly, and went on with her sweeping.

Now I am not a great judge of crossing sweeping, but I have watched the members of the profession at work long enough to know how they generally go about it, and I instantly came to the conclusion that the old lady was not a very old hand at the business.



She didn't go about the work in the regular way, and although while I stood watching her several people crossed the road, she didn't drop a curtsey or sweep imaginary mud aside in the regular professional manner.

Perhaps she was a little confused by the way in which I stared at her, and that accounted for her absent-mindedness, for presently when a young lady came across the road the old woman followed her up closely and whined out, "Spare a copper for the poor old crossing sweeper, lady. Please spare a copper." "I haven't one," said the young lady, and passed on. "How do you find business here?" I said, determined to get into conversation with the old lady who had thoroughly piqued my curiosity. "Better than at your old crossing, or not so good?"

"I can't say yet. I ain't been here long enough."

With that the old lady walked across to the other side of the road, and began sweeping as far away as possible.

"She isn't inclined to be friendly," I thought to myself. "Perhaps she thinks I'm a mendicity man, or something of that sort."

I had an important appointment in Oxford Street, and so I was unable on this occasion to devote any more time to the study of the new crossing sweeper. After I had walked some little distance along Bedford Square I turned round, and I saw that the old lady was looking after me. Directly she saw that I was watching her she resumed her work.

I was out of doors for the remainder of the day, and it was ten o'clock in the evening before I turned my steps homewards. In passing through Dyott Street, a narrow street in Bloomsbury, in which there still remain a few of the old common lodging-houses, I saw an old man staggering out of a public-house, evidently slightly the worse for liquor.

As I came up to him I recognized him at once. It was old Tom, our regular crossing sweeper.



“Why, Tom,” I said, “what’s the matter with you?”

He pulled himself together directly, and made a desperate effort to appear sober in the presence of a regular patron.

“Beg your pardon, sir,” he mumbled. “Hope you won’t think I’m often like this, but—er—I’ve had a bit of luck and I’ve took more than’s good for me.”

“A bit of luck, eh? Sold your crossing to the old lady, eh?”

“Oh, you noticed her, did you? No, I ain’t sold it to her. I’ve only sold her the broom; but I’ve let her have the crossing for a week, and she’s giv’ me two suverins for it—two whole suverins. Rum go, ain’t it?”

“Very rum! So the old lady’s hired the crossing for a week, eh? Did you know her at her other crossing?”

“Lor’ bless you, sir, I never see her in my life afore. She come to my place where I live, and she says: ‘You’re the man as sweeps at the top of Keppel Street, Gower Street, ain’t you?’

“‘Yes, mum,’ I sez, ‘I am!’ Then she outs with what she wants. She’d give me half-a-crown for my broom and two suverins if I’d let her have that crossin’ for a week, and I took it. It’s a rum go, ain’t it, cus it ain’t wuth it, and, between you and me, sir, I don’t believe the old gal ever swept a crossin’ afore in her life.”

“It is a rum go, Tom, but I hope you won’t spend all the money in the public-houses, or you’ll have the worst of the bargain.”

With which piece of good advice I left him and went home.

The next day the old lady was at her crossing again. She was there all the week. When I passed I had a good look at her, and in order to get a better chance I always stopped and felt in my pocket for a copper for some little time, before I drew it out and gave it her. She always thanked me civilly enough, but I felt quite sure she



objected to my scrutiny. At the end of the week the old lady disappeared, and old Tom was back in his accustomed place.

From him I could gather nothing, except that the old lady had returned him his broom, and informed him that she thought she should go back to her own crossing again, "as it paid better."

I made an entry, "The Mysterious Crossing Sweeper," in the little note book which I always carry to jot down odd ideas and notions in, and then the matter passed out of my mind, until it was brought back again in a very curious way.

A few doors from me in Gower Street there lived a lady who, in defiance of the clauses of her lease, took in lodgers. It is a legend in Gower Street that the houses must not be let out in apartments. In order to keep up the respectability of the thoroughfare it is, or was, understood that the lease contained a stringent clause against sticking up bills in the windows or inserting advertisements in newspapers to the effect that lodgings are to let.

The clause, if it exists, is certainly set at defiance, for lodgings are as plentiful in Gower Street as blackberries in September.

Mrs. Smith, the lady who let the lodgings openly, and with cards and with advertisements announced the fact, lived a few doors below me, and I had made her acquaintance through a professional friend of mine who lodged in her house, a young fellow playing at one of the London theatres, by name Richard Lampson, commonly called "Dick."

About a week after the old lady crossing-sweeper had resigned her broom in Gower Street I was passing Mrs. Smith's house, when Lampson, who had the dining-room floor, tapped at the window and beckoned me to come in.

"There's been a nice upset here last night," he said. "You know that pretty little woman I told you about, Mrs. Vere, who had the floor above me?"



“Yes ; I saw her once at the window.”

“Well, last night there was quite a scene here. An old gentleman and an old lady drove up in a cab and asked to see Mrs. Vere. The landlady said she would see if Mrs. Vere was in, but the lady and gentleman followed her, and were in the room right on her heels. Directly Mrs. Vere caught sight of the old gentleman she gave a shriek, and then (the landlady told me all about it) there was a nice to do. The old gentleman, it seems, was Mrs. Vere’s papa. The old lady was her mamma, and it was quite a dramatic scene, the end of it being that papa and mamma drove off with their daughter, who seemed very much distressed, and was crying bitterly.”

“But I thought you told me that Mrs. Vere was married, and that her husband lived here with her,” I interrupted.

“Just so ; and that is the strangest part of the affair. When she was leaving, the landlady stood at the front door. As the cab had driven away she looked after it down the street, and she declares that she saw Mr. Vere, the husband, standing in the doorway of the opposite house, where he had evidently been watching the proceedings. Instead of coming over he walked away in the opposite direction, and he hasn’t been here since.”

“H’m. I suppose the truth is they were not married.”

“No,” replied Dick, “I don’t think that’s the solution of the mystery, for my landlady tells me that the old gentleman gave her a message. ‘If my daughter’s husband wants to know where she is,’ he said, ‘refer him to me.’ With that he gave her his card, from which she learnt that he was Sir George Elliston, of Farnham Hall, Henley-on-Thames.”

“Sir George Elliston—why that must be the banker. He’s a very wealthy man.”

“Yes, and its hardly likely that his daughter would occupy a drawing-room floor in Gower Street with a man who wasn’t her husband.”



"Hardly. It must have been a runaway match, and the man must be somebody the family strongly disapprove of. It must have been a *mésalliance*."

"I should think so, but after all if the young lady is Vere's wife, the father cannot take her away from him. At any rate, it would be a curious thing for him to stand opposite the house and see it done without interfering—a very curious thing—there must be something more in it than we can guess at."

While we were talking the landlady came into Dick's room.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Lampson," she said, "I didn't know you had any one with you."

"It's all right, Mrs. Smith, we were only talking about Mrs. Vere. Have you found out anything fresh?"

"No, but I have just had a telegram from Sir George saying that Mrs. Vere's boxes will be called for to-day, and that I am to give them up. It's very odd, isn't it, we've packed everything, and I don't see that I can keep them, for the rent's paid."

"But what about the husband's property," I asked, "You can't give that up unless he comes for it himself, and I am not sure you are justified in giving anything up without his sanction."

"He hasn't left any property," replied the landlady, "and that's the oddest thing about the whole affair. He took his portmanteau and his things away yesterday morning, saying he was going away for a week—and yet I'll swear he was standing opposite this house last night. I shall give the young lady's things up to Sir George. I don't want to have any bother or legal proceedings, and I'm quite sure the husband won't interfere. If he'd been going to he'd have done it when his wife was taken away—he wouldn't have waited till her boxes went."

At that moment a cab drove up to the door and a young man got out and knocked. The servant went to the door.



and presently came in to say that Sir George Elliston had sent his servant for Mrs. Vere's boxes and any property she'd left in the room.

The boxes and all the things that Mrs. Smith could find were duly brought down and loaded on the cab. Then the young man got in and was driven off.

I was standing with Lampson at his window, watching the proceedings, when all of a sudden I gave an exclamation of surprise.

"What's the matter?" asked Lampson.

"Do you see that old lady who's just come up the street in a hansom cab?"

"Well, what of her?"

"Oh, nothing; only I'll swear that she's the same old lady who a week ago was sweeping the crossing at Keppel Street. I've stared at her too often not to know her again now."

"Go on with you—a crossing sweeper in a hansom cab."

"You may laugh, but I'll wager every shilling I'm worth in the world that I'm right."

At that moment the four-wheel cab with Mrs. Vere's luggage on it turned the corner by Bedford Square, and round the same corner, close behind it, went the hansom cab in which sat the old lady crossing sweeper.

What did it mean?

. . . . .

Two days afterwards I received a little further information from Dick about what he called "The Vere mystery." On the same afternoon that Mrs. Vere's luggage had been taken away, Sir George had called at the house himself.

He was thunderstruck when he was told that he had authorised its removal. He had never sent any telegram, he had never instructed any one to call.

"It's that scoundrel Vere," he exclaimed; "he was afraid to call himself, and he thought that perhaps after my



daughter going away with me you would hesitate to give her things up to him, and so he concocted this little plot. There must be something in the boxes that he wanted, or he wouldn't have gone to the trouble. Well, let him have them, and I hope I shall never hear of the wretch again."

Mrs. Smith ventured to make a few inquiries, and Sir George instantly, to use a vulgar expression, "dried up." His indignation had led him into saying more than he intended. "My dear madam," he said, "my daughter has married a man who was unable to support her; he has deserted her—I have taken her home. Your rent is paid, That is all you want to know. Pray don't gossip about the matter if you can help it. Good afternoon."

. . . . .

It must have been quite twelve months after the disappearance of Mrs. Vere from Gower Street, that one afternoon I was sitting outside the Cafe de la Paix in Paris when I caught sight of my old friend Inspector Tozer, formerly of Scotland Yard and now of — Street, Strand, Private Detective.

I called to him and he came across and we exchanged friendly greetings—I invited him to sit down and have a cigar.

"No thanks, old fellow," he replied "I'm in a hurry."

"Got a job on here?"

"Yes—I am going up to the Bois—come with me."

"Certainly."

We hailed a fiacre, and away we drove.

"What is it this time, Tozer?" I asked, for I am always keenly alive to the romance of a private inquiry.

"Can't tell you now, my boy. Ask me in six months' time."

I accepted the hint and talked about something else. We drove through the Arc de Triomphe, and although my companion did not appear to be taking any interest in the scene I was quite sure he was looking for someone among



the occupiers of the carriages that drove past us. Suddenly I gripped the detective's arm.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"Look yonder," I cried; "there—at that old lady in the landau."

"I don't think much of the old lady, but the horses are magnificent—they are superb."

That old woman was a crossing sweeper when I first saw her," I exclaimed.

The detective looked at me very curiously for a moment. I suppose he thought I was a little touched.

"Nonsense," he replied. "That old lady is Mrs. Cyrus Cox, of Chicago, widow of a cattle king, and worth Heaven knows how many million dollars. She lives in Paris now."

"And the handsome young man sitting in the carriage by her side—is he her son, then?"

"No, my dear fellow—he is her future husband." I was dumfounded. I could have sworn the old lady was my crossing sweeper, but the landau, the magnificence, the millions—I must have been mistaken—yet I never saw such a resemblance in my life.

"It's a curious story, that old lady's," continued the detective. "She's marrying that young fellow through an advertisement."

"Indeed."

"Yes. It seems the old girl, tired of widowhood, went to a marriage agency in Paris and was advertised. You know the sort of thing: 'A widow of fortune is anxious to meet with a suitable partner; must be dark, handsome; money no object if of gentlemanly appearance and manner.'"

"And this young fellow answered the advertisement?"

"I suppose so. At any rate, that's what Paris gossip says. And I know they're to be married next week at the English Church."

"What's his name?"



“Vaughan—or something of the sort—I should think he was a penniless adventurer, and I wish the old girl joy of him.”

“Cocher! Hotel Continental!”

The coachman turned the horse's head towards Paris, and we drove back again. It struck me after he had set me down at the Grand that the detective's business in the Bois seemed to be finished as soon as he had seen Mrs. Cyrus Cox and her affianced husband.

Left to myself and to my own thoughts my mind reverted to the old lady crossing sweeper of Gower Street. Mrs. Cox had brought her back most vividly to my mind. Of course, Mrs. Cyrus Cox, of Chicago, couldn't possibly have been a crossing sweeper, but it was a most extraordinary resemblance.

I stayed in Paris a fortnight, and only saw Inspector Tozer once more. At the end of the fortnight, business called me back to London. I left by the morning train, and when I reached Calais they were selling the London papers of that day. I bought a *Daily Telegraph*, and after reading the leaders I turned to an inside page.

There a name at once attracted my attention. It was that of Mrs. Cyrus Cox. The paragraph which I read was to the effect that a Mrs. Cyrus Cox, supposed to be the widow of a wealthy American, had been the victim of a fashionable adventurer who had made her acquaintance through an advertisement. The widow had advertised for a husband, and had selected from the written offers received an English gentleman, who called himself Harry Vaughan. The courtship was short; the ceremony took place at the English Church, and the happy couple started to spend their honeymoon in England by the bride's request. They were to go to Dover and then to proceed to Scotland. On the arrival at Dover the bride complained of being upset by the passage, and did not want to continue her journey for a day or two.



On the second day of their stay, a gentleman arrived at the hotel. He announced himself as a police officer and proceeded at once to arrest Mr. Vaughan as one Henry Vere on a charge of bigamy. In spite of his protest the gentleman was told to consider himself in custody, and was taken up to London without being allowed to explain his situation to his bride. It is understood that a former marriage with a young lady, the daughter of an eminent and wealthy English banker, can be proved.

“Vere,” I exclaimed as I dropped the paper. “Vere,” why that’s the name of the man who married Mr. George Elliston’s daughter. They lived in Gower Street, and it was there I saw the crossing sweeper in a hansom cab following Mrs. Vere’s luggage. I’ll take my oath now that Mrs. Cyrus Cox was the crossing sweeper.”

When the case came on I was away in the provinces, but I read the account. The first wife was present—she was a Miss Elliston—her marriage was proved. The second wife gave her name as Janet Cox, and described herself as a widow. She related the story of her advertisement and of the marriage, and she stated that her husband had signed all the papers, and gone through the ceremony in the name of Henry Vere, explaining to her that Vere was his real name, but that for family reasons he called himself Vaughan.

The prisoner made no defence—there was none to make—and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

Sometime afterwards the name of Vere cropped up again in the Divorce Court—Mrs. Vere sued for a divorce from her husband, Henry Vere, on the ground of bigamy, and the divorce was eventually granted.

But still the mystery of the crossing sweeper who became an American millionairess, or the American millionairess who became a crossing sweeper remained unexplained. I talked the whole affair over with Dick Lampson, and we summoned Mrs. Smith to our counsel, but we



however could make nothing of it. We all agreed that it was very curious that Mrs. Vere No. 1, or her friends, should have had such remarkably early information of the second marriage, as to get the bridegroom arrested soon after the commencement of his bigamous career.

We wondered what had become of Mrs. Cyrus Cox—had she returned to Paris to advertise again, or had she taken warning from the fate which had befallen her, and settled down in widowed blessedness for the remainder of her life—or (the suggestion was Dick's) had she developed her old eccentricity and bought another broom and hired another crossing.

The whole thing might have remained a mystery to us for ever, had I not one day wanted, for professional purposes, to visit the Black Museum at Scotland Yard. Thinking how I could best manage to get an introduction to the officer in charge, which would secure me something more than the cursory glance to which the general public are treated, I remembered my old friend Tozer. I knew he would give me a letter which would secure me all I wanted, and so I went down to the office and sent up my card. I was admitted at once into his sanctum and heartily welcomed. I explained my business, and Tozer gave me the letter. Then he began to talk about business, and he told me of some highly romantic cases in which he had lately been engaged. One in particular interested me very much. He had prevented a marriage between a young nobleman and a young lady in the chorus of a burlesque theatre by means of a young lady detective on his staff. This young lady had actually secured an engagement at the theatre, and dressed every night in the same room with the ambitious damsel, and became her bosom friend and the repository of all her secrets, and had acquired information which, communicated to the friends of the young nobleman, had enabled them to nip the *mésalliance* in the bud.



"Very clever," I said, "but it seems rather mean, doesn't it, to do that sort of thing?"

"All's fair in love and the detective business," he replied. "I call it jolly clever. Would you like to see Miss Jones, the girl who did it. You'd never take her for a female detective."

"I should very much like to see her," I replied.

The great Tozer struck a bell, and a clerk answered it. "Send Miss Jones to me."

Miss Jones, a remarkably elegant young woman of about five-and-twenty entered, and I confess I should never have suspected her calling. We had a little conversation, in which she told us of some remarkable adventures she had had, and then being called away on business she left us.

"I have another lady here I should like you to see," said Tozer, as I rose to go. "She's the cleverest woman in England, bar none, and worth her weight in gold. You wouldn't believe what that woman's done. No man could have done it half as cleverly."

With that he rose, went into an inner office, and returned with a lady.

He introduced her.

"This is Mrs——"

He didn't get any farther.

"The crossing sweeper!" I exclaimed.

Yes. There standing before me in Tozer's office was a little old lady whom I at once recognized as the crossing sweeper of Gower Street, and as Mrs. Cyrus Cox, of the Bois de Boulogne.

The little old lady had recognized me too.

"You didn't believe I was a crossing sweeper," she said. "Ah, you were a terrible nuisance. I was afraid you might know somebody where the Veres were lodging and spoil all my plans."

"You were watching the Veres, then?"



"Yes," replied Tozer. "Mrs. Cox, that's her correct name without the Cyrus, you know, was put on by me to find Miss Elliston, and to find out who the man was with whom she had eloped."

"She suspected Vere, who was an accomplished scoundrel, and had been mixed up in a good many queer transactions, and as she knew he would spot her if she walked about the street, and watched in the usual way, and so she hit on the idea of sweeping the crossing. That enabled her to watch the house all day, and as soon as she had seen Miss Elliston at the window and Vere go into the house she was satisfied, and reported to me, and I communicated with Mr. Elliston, who had put the case in my hands."

"She watched the house the day after he took his daughter away, and when her luggage went she guessed what was up, and followed it to Vere's lodgings, where it was taken. He wanted the jewellery and the letters, which were in the boxes, I expect. At anyrate that induced her to watch Vere until he left for Paris, and then we telegraphed to have the train met by one of our men there, who kept him in view till we wanted him."

"And the marriage?"

"Well, that was a desperate scheme, but it was all Mrs. Cox's idea. Wonderful woman, you are, Cox, to be sure."

Mrs. Cox accepted the compliment with a little toss of her head.

"It wasn't very wonderful," she replied, "seeing that Mr. Elliston said he would give a thousand pounds to get his daughter freed from the man she was tied to for life, and who was a bad lot, as the girl herself discovered and admitted as soon as she came to her senses. He had simply made love to her, and persuaded her to elope and marry him in order to get money and blackmail the family. Fortunately, we gave Mr. Elliston some infor-



mation about him, which stopped that, and made my gentleman sing small. When I found that he was settled in Paris, I ascertained that he was trying the same game on with the widow of a shopkeeper. Whether he would have married her I don't know, but I determined that he should marry me. I hired a carriage and pair, lived in grand style in a villa at Neuilly, just outside Paris, and gave out that I was a rich widow, and looking out for a husband. I took care that he should hear of me, and read the advertisement. The Marriage Bureau lady managed that, and presently, to my great delight, I found the fish was hooked."

"You know the rest," broke in Inspector Tozer. "The marriage was duly solemnized, and Mrs. Cox expressed her intention of settling a large sum of money on her husband. She persuaded him to come for the honeymoon to England, and at once wired me, and I communicated with the police, with the result which you know. Mrs. Cox got rid of her illegal husband, and Miss Elliston of her legal one. Mr. Elliston paid all the expenses, and has behaved very handsomely to Mrs. Cox and myself for severing his daughter from a tie which would have marred her whole life. Clever, wasn't it?"

"Very clever," I said, "but it was a plot. It was collusion."

"Oh, bosh!" exclaimed Tozer, "nobody, not even Vere, knew anything about that, and it wasn't our business to enlighten him. Vere committed bigamy, and if a man or woman commits bigamy that entitles the wife or husband to a divorce, and that was all we wanted. Cox did it, and I don't care where the other comes from she's the cleverest female detective in London."

I readily admitted that, and congratulated Mrs. Cox on her success, and then I bade Tozer good-day, and went back to tell Dick Lampson that I had fathomed the mystery of the old lady crossing sweeper at last.



## UNCLE FROM AMERICA.

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THE Whympennys were rather a scattered family. Old Mr. Whympenny lived in the little cottage in Bedfordshire, to which Tom Whympenny had brought his wife nearly forty years ago; but the wife had been lying in the village churchyard for nearly fifteen years, and old Tom, who was young Tom then, had never found it in his heart to put another woman in her place.

The young Whympennys had grown up under the parental roof until the cottage grew too crowded and the village seemed too small for them, and then one by one they had gone out into the world to seek their fortunes. Tom, the eldest son, came to London, and in due time settled down as the manager of a small fruit shop which was one of the branch establishments of a big East End fruiterer. Jack, the second son, went to sea, didn't like it, came back again, married, and, having to do something for a living, eventually became a policeman. The girls went out to service. Sarah, the eldest, was a housemaid until she married Sam Green, a waiter, then she retired into private life until her husband took to rheumatism and betting. The rheumatism and the betting between them stopped the waiting, and then Mrs. Green went out nursing ladies, and so kept a home together, in which Sam passed his time, groaning over his rheumatism and endeavoring to spot winners.

The second daughter, Jane, went into the service of the local clergyman, and worked her way up to the



position of housekeeper, when the clergyman's wife died. From being the clergyman's housekeeper, she became housekeeper to a wealthy but invalid old gentleman in London, and being of a sober and serious turn of mind, she drifted on towards middle age without indulging in thoughts of matrimony.

The third daughter, Mary, remained with her father until a good-looking young gardener, Joe Twemlow, who worked at "the big house," and whose father and mother lived in the next cottage to the Whympennys, fell over head and ears in love with her, and persuaded her to marry him, and go to London with him, where he had a good berth offered him in the suburbs, as head gardener and lodge-keeper.

The fourth daughter, Kate, had married a year previously, and settled down in the village, so that Mary had less scruple than she would have had in leaving her father, as Kate "lived handy," and could run in and look after him now and then.

In this way the Whympenny family broke up, and old Tom Whympenny was left in his cottage alone. He didn't mind it very much at first when he could get out and about, and had his strength and the use of his limbs. He found plenty to do in his own little garden in his leisure, and he was employed at the church, and at the big school in the neighborhood. At the church he was pew-opener, at the school he did a variety of odd jobs, and between the church, the school and his garden, he managed to earn sufficient for his simple wants without troubling his sons and daughters.

This was the position of affairs when an event happened which was destined to have a tremendous effect upon the family history, and to play havoc with the relations existing between the various members.

It was a tradition in the Twemlow family, the family which lived next door to the Whympennys, and whose



son Joe had made Mary Whympenny a Mrs. Twemlow, that some day old Mrs. Twemlow's brother, Eli Furlong, was coming back from America. Uncle Eli had been twenty years in America, there he had married, settled down and prospered, and when he wrote to his relations, which was about once a year, he always spoke vaguely of coming home some day to have a look at the old country.

Uncle Eli was not very communicative about his private affairs, but he said enough in his letters to let his relatives know that he had done well at his trade and had made a tidy bit of money.

There wasn't much to gossip about in the little Bedfordshire village, and so the Twemlows naturally talked occasionally of their rich uncle in America, and in the course of years, his wealth grew in the imagination of the villagers, until he was popularly supposed to be a millionaire of the most approved American type.

Uncle Eli was kept pretty well informed of the marriages and deaths and movements which occurred in his family circle at home. He had gone out from this village a man of forty, and it was also on record that at one time, before he went to America, it was supposed that he was rather sweet on Jane Whympenny.

You must bear this in mind, to understand the flutter of excitement that was caused in the family, when one day old Mrs. Twemlow received a letter from her brother, stating that his wife was dead, and that he had been ordered to travel in order to keep himself from brooding over his loss, and so he was coming back to England at last to see his friends and relatives.

Uncle Eli was coming home—was coming home a widower and childless; was coming home with all his vast wealth to look up his friends and relatives! It was great news. It was tremendous news. Mrs. Twemlow, of course, rushed in at once to old Mr. Whympenny and



told him all about it : old Mr. Whympenny wrote off at once to his daughter Mary who had married Joe Twemlow—Mary Twemlow with her husband was now living in London—she as housekeeper and he as gardener to a Mr. Jones, a widower. Mary Twemlow immediately rushed upstairs to her master and asked for a day's holiday. and tore off round London to inform her sisters and her brothers ; and from that moment nothing occupied their thoughts but the coming home of the American uncle.

“He's *my* uncle, you know, not yours,” said Joe Twemlow, when his wife told him that she had communicated the news to her relatives.

“If he's your uncle he's mine too,” said Mrs. Twemlow.

“Only by marriage, ” said Joe.

“Well, we needn't begin to quarrel about him, Joe, he haven't come yet, and I'm sure my people don't want anything from him.”

“They won't get it if they do,” replied Joe, who felt rather aggrieved that the Whympennys should make such a fuss about his uncle, and Mrs. Twemlow, being a wise little woman, allowed the matter to drop.

In the family of the Greens, the matter was also discussed that evening. When Sam Green, the sporting and rheumatic waiter, came limping in with the special *Standard*, which he always purchased for the winners and the starting prices, and began growling and swearing because a ten-to-one chance, on which he put the half crown he had borrowed of his hard-working little wife, had been beaten by a neck. Mrs. Green informed him that “Uncle Eli, who was so rich, was coming home from America.”

“What !” exclaimed Sam, and immediately he conceived a wild idea of getting Uncle Eli to advance him a hundred or so, with which he could start a ready-money book, and lay against the animals who persisted in going down when he backed them.



The policeman was married, and so was the fruiterer, and that evening the policeman called on the fruiterer, and the brothers went out together and had a friendly glass and a cigar together at the Three Jolly Sailors, and they both agreed that Uncle Eli's acquaintance must be cultivated.

Jane, the housekeeper to an invalid gentleman, asked for the evening next day, and came round and had tea with Mrs. Twemlow, and discussed the matter before Joe came in from his work, and Mrs. Twemlow said :

"You know, Jane, Uncle Eli was a great admirer of yours twenty years ago."

"Oh, nonsense," replied Jane ; "besides, if he was, he's forgotten me long ago."

"Well," said Mary, "I shall ask master to let me ask him to tea here when he comes, and you must come, too."

Jane laughed. She confessed she should be very glad to see Uncle Eli again, and then both sisters hoped that if he went down to the Twemlows they would make him comfortable and treat him properly, and that no designing member of the Twemlow family would get hold of him for their own ends and purposes.

You see the Whympennys had gradually established a claim to the Twemlows' uncle as their own uncle, and long before he arrived every member of the Whympenny family referred to him as "Uncle Eli from America," a proceeding which invariably put Joe Twemlow's back up, and caused him to bang the table and proclaim for the hundredth time that Eli Furlong was *his* mother's brother, and *his* uncle, and that the Whympennys had nothing to do with it.

And just as the relations of the family were getting a little strained, owing to frequent tea parties at each other's houses, and rather heated discussions as to who had the best right to be polite to Uncle Eli, and who had the least right to "shove themselves forward," Uncle Eli arrived in London.



The news of his arrival was accompanied by a thunder-clap.

A bold, designing young woman, the wife of Tom Dodson, who was nothing but a second cousin of Uncle Eli, had actually gone to Liverpool, met the ship, seized Uncle Eli at the landing-stage, and borne him off in triumph to her home at North Woolwich, which she had persuaded him was the most central point in the Metropolis, close to the principal theatres and thoroughfares, and within walking distance of Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Churchyard, the monument, the Zoological Gardens and the British Museum.

The Twemlows and the Whympennys forgot their jealousy of each other and joined hands in the face of a common enemy—to think that a second cousin's wife, a Dodson, should actually have secured their Uncle Eli, and locked him within her own four walls, while they were devising little schemes to keep him from each other.

It was perfidy ! It was treachery ! It was an outrage on family rights !

The men declared that Mrs. Tom Dodson was an artful minx—the ladies rolled up their eyes and held up their hands and declared that Mrs. Tom Dodson's conduct was “downright indecent !”

But Mr. and Mrs. Tom Dodson had secured possession of Uncle Eli—he was in their house, his boxes were there, and there was no getting over the fact.

The first Sunday after Uncle Eli arrived, the capacity of Mrs. Dodson's best parlor was tested to its utmost dimensions. All the Twemlows and all the Whympennys in London arrived about tea-time. Uncle Eli was delighted, but Mrs. Tom Dodson was inclined to be nasty. She dropped a few pretty straight hints that she hadn't expected so much company. And when everybody had crowded round the little table who could, and the others sat by the window and by the fire on chairs brought in



from the kitchen and the bedroom, and cups and saucers were short, and the milk ran out, and Uncle Eli talked a great deal more to the Whympennys, especially Jane Whympenny, than he did to the Twemlows ("his own blood," as they said afterwards), or to the Dodsons, who had offered him their home, and given up their best bedroom to him, and made themselves his slaves; then Mrs. Dodson, in a private conversation with Joe Twemlow, asserted that the Whympennys were a forward lot, and that she had always heard they were fond of shoving themselves in where they weren't wanted, and there and then Mrs. Dodson improved the occasion by informing Joe Twemlow that the Whympennys were wasting their time, for, so far from Uncle Eli being a millionaire, he'd only got about a couple of thousand pounds put away, and he wasn't the man to be bamboozled by strangers into neglecting his own kindred.

*Only* a couple of thousand pounds! Joe Twemlow thought that was a great deal of money, and he said so; and as to Uncle Eli not being bamboozled—well, he was a very generous man, and though he, Joe, had married a Whympenny, he wouldn't trust one farther than he could see her or him—especially her!

When Mrs. Dodson and Joe Twemlow came in from the garden with Tom Dodson (they had been out to get Joe's professional opinion as to the best way of stopping the vegetable marrows from spreading all over the place and even coming in at the kitchen door and running up the side of the house and getting into the dog kennel and lolling over the garden wall after the manner of free and unrestrained vegetable marrows generally), they—Joe and Mrs. Dodson and Tom—not the vegetable marrows—found Uncle Eli so surrounded by the Whympennys that you couldn't see anything of him except just the top of his bald head, and they were all inviting him at the top of their voices to come and see them at their respec-



tive residences and take tea at the earliest possible opportunity.

"Don't crowd Uncle Eli like that," exclaimed Mrs. Dodson, angrily.

"They ain't crowding me," answered Uncle Eli. "They're only inviting me to see them. I think I'll go and have tea with Mary to-morrow evening, eh?"

"Yes, do," exclaimed Mrs. Twemlow. "I'm sure master won't mind." Then turning to her sister, she said, "Jane, you'll come, won't you?"

Joe Twemlow at once suggested that the party would be too large.

"The master mightn't like a big party in his kitchen."

"You go on, Joe, and mind your own business," answered his wife, sharply. "I know master won't say anything if I tell him first."

Joe Twemlow wanted Uncle Eli to come, but he didn't care about Jane Whympenny.

Mrs. Dodson, finding that no mention was made of her coming, too, at once reminded Uncle Eli that they had arranged to go to the theatre on Monday evening.

Uncle Eli would put that off.

Then Mrs. Dodson recollected she had asked some particular friends of hers to meet Uncle Eli on Monday evening and have supper.

Whereupon Mary Twemlow, who was a plucky little woman, went quietly up to Mrs. Dodson and suggested in a low voice that she supposed Mrs. Dodson would like to keep Uncle Eli all to herself, and why didn't she lock him up in the top attic and put a policeman to guard the door.

Mrs. Dodson replied that *some* people thought they were very clever, but she could see through them, and the ladies' voices gradually rose, which created a diversion and drew all the family away from Uncle Eli to join in the discussion.



This gave Mr. Sam Green, the rheumatic and sporting waiter, the opportunity he had a long time been watching for, and he button-holed Uncle Eli at once and informed him of a scheme which he had for making a fortune on the turf which only required a hundred pounds for its development.

The discussion in the corner between Mrs. Dodson and Mrs. Twemlow ended in all the Whympennys, with Mary Twemlow at their head, going upstairs to put on their bonnets and cloaks, and vowing that they would never cross Mrs. Dodson's threshold again, and they only hoped that poor Uncle Eli would see through her in time and escape with a remnant of his fortune left to cheer his declining days.

And when the ladies were upstairs robing for their departure, Tom Whympenny, the fruiterer, and Jack Whympenny, the policeman, each had a short interview with Uncle Eli, and placed themselves body and soul at his service, and both took the opportunity of warning him against Sam Green, who never had a shilling to bless himself with through his gambling propensities ; and they also hinted that North Woolwich was by no means a healthy place, especially for people who had lived for a long time in America.

When the family party had broken up Mrs. Dodson gave vent to tears and became slightly hysterical. It was so hard that her kindness to her dear Tom's cousin should be misinterpreted. Uncle Eli reassured Mrs. Dodson and persuaded her to dry her eyes, and presented her there and then with a beautiful gold watch which he had intended for his sister, old Mrs. Twemlow.

But he went to the Twemlow tea party the next evening, and there he found Joe and Mary and Jane, all smiling and waiting for him. "Master" had readily given his consent to the entertainment of Uncle from America, and Mary had enlisted the cook's good graces, and a very



substantial high tea was laid out on the snowiest of white cloths. Mary had gone to no end of expense in the matter. She had drawn a whole sovereign out of the Post Office Savings Bank, although she had only a week previously assured Joe, her husband, that she hadn't one there, and she had provided a beautiful ham, cold fowls, cakes, shrimps, watercresses, jams, and all the luxuries of the season.

Joe Twemlow made himself very agreeable all the evening, except when Uncle Eli paid too much attention to Jane Whympenny, and there was only one anxious moment during the entire festival, and that was when the cook, who was a single young woman of some sixteen stone weight, favored the company with her religious views, and it was found that she and Uncle Eli belonged to the same body of brethren, and the cook informed Uncle Eli where the chapel was she attended, and offered to introduce him to the minister.

In the face of this common danger, Joe Twemlow and Jane Whympenny stood side by side and turned the conversation instantly on to some other subject. There is no more dangerous place for a rich widower than the chapel to which he is introduced by a fair co-religionist who has arrived at middle age, a spinster.

When the Twemlow party broke up Uncle Eli presented Mary Twemlow with a bracelet which had been his wife's, and he saw Jane Whympenny to her 'bus, courteously declining the offer of Joe to accompany them. This made Joe ill-tempered for the rest of the evening, and he kept his wife awake half the night by lecturing her on the impropriety of her trying to hook *his* uncle for one of *her* sisters before his very eyes.

The next festival connected with the return of Uncle Eli took place in the little Bedfordshire village. Having expressed his intention of visiting his sister, the Whympenny's (who, you may remember, came from next door)



determined to make his visit the occasion of a family gathering. So they invited uncle to dine at their father's cottage on the Sunday following his arrival, and he readily accepted, old Mr. and Mrs. Twemlow of course included in the invitation.

Mary Twemlow, an excellent manageress, was entrusted with all the arrangements of the feast. She obtained leave from her master to be absent from the Saturday to the Monday, and on Saturday evening she arrived with her husband, a splendid leg of mutton, a Christmas pudding, a round of beef, a goose, two bottles of sherry and a bottle of the best Scotch. Scotch was Uncle Eli's infallible remedy for indigestion, and he only took it as a medicine, being a teetotaller; but after beef and mutton, and goose and plum-pudding, indigestion is allowable in the best regulated teetotaller.

The only unpleasantness which marred the festive gathering in its initial stage was caused by old Mrs. Twemlow. Old Mrs. Twemlow enjoyed the reputation in the village of always speaking her mind plainly with an utter lack of consideration for the feelings of her hearers. Old Mrs. Twemlow commenced to speak her mind directly her brother arrived. She informed him bluntly that he was an old fool.

After twenty years absence in America it is not pleasant to be welcomed back to your native village by your nearest relative with the assurance that you are an old fool.

Uncle Eli smiled.

"You're not a bit changed, Sister Sue," he said pleasantly.

"No, I'm not changed, Eli. I always did speak my mind, and I always will. You're an old fool. You're letting yourself be gulled by those Dodsons, who won't leave you a rag to your back, and if they do the Whym-pennys will have it."



"Oh, nonsense, Sue. They've only been showing me a little kindness."

"Showing you a little kindness! Oh, yes, I've heard about it. A gold watch for a fourpenny plate of ham, a bracelet for a cup of tea. They've made you pay for your kindness, anyhow, and your own lawful relations haven't so much as seen a new gown, or an ornament for the chimneypiece. Mark my words, Eli Furlong, they'll strip you to the skin."

Eli Furlong knew by the experience of his youth that it was no good contradicting Sister Sue, so he laughed and walked off to the market town, three miles away, and returned with a clock under his arm as a peace-offering to his sister.

Mrs. Twemlow accepted the clock with a grunt, turned it over, and examined it critically, and then said:

"H'm! I know it. It's been in Robinson the pawnbroker's window for the last six months. A great bargain—one pound sixteen shillings and sixpence, and the gold watch you gave that Dodson woman I'm told cost thirty pounds if it cost a penny. Thank you, Eli, all the same."

Uncle Eli began to wish that he hadn't come; but he was all right when later on Mary and Joe arrived, bringing with them the beef and the goose and the mutton, and Jane.

Jane Whympenny was a comely, lady-like woman of two and forty. She had lived in good places, and acquired the dignified demeanor of the housekeeper of clergymen and invalid widowers. She always wore a black silk dress, and a long gold chain, and she had lace collars and cuffs. Her once jet black hair had turned gray, as jet black hair will do; but her complexion was still the complexion of a country woman, and her eyes were large and bright. Altogether a most desirable housekeeper was Jane Whympenny, with the West End Hall mark on her,



and evidently from her conversation just the sort of a woman to make a home happy and comfortable with a due regard to economy.

Uncle Eli was only sixty—a fine well-preserved man. Jane was forty-two. No wonder Joe Twemlow shook his head—no wonder old Mrs. Twemlow spoke her mind—no wonder Mrs. Dodson cried her eyes out with rage when a beautiful gold necklace which had come over in Uncle Eli's trunk was one day quite by accident discovered to be in the possession of Jane Whympenny.

The Sunday dinner party at Mr. Whympenny's cottage would have been a great success but for three drawbacks. The first drawback was old Mrs. Twemlow's outspoken mind, the second was the arrival of Sam Green (uninvited) by the two o'clock train from London, in a condition partly caused by rheumatism, and partly caused by whiskey, which made it difficult for him to walk or to sit up straight, and the third drawback was the curious conduct of Joe Twemlow, who would persist in telling a story about a young woman of forty-two who had married an old man of sixty for his money and then got rid of him by putting arsenic in his tea; and each time that Joe told the story he was careful to add that she didn't put any arsenic in the old man's beer because he was a teetotaller.

Mrs. Twemlow enjoyed her son's story—nobody else did.

"Very true, Joe," she said, "very true. He was an old fool to be took in by her, but there's plenty of old fools about."

Poor Mary Twemlow, who had cooked the dinner and done all the work, and whose heart and soul were in the party, looked daggers at her husband; but it was all no use, and he would have gone on telling the story till the party broke up if Sam Green, who had been picked up on the floor and under the table, and propped up in the easy chair, hadn't created a diversion by going into the back



kitchen and falling into the fireplace, where he lay smouldering until the smell of singed whiskers and hair attracted the attention of the company, who rushed in just in time to roll him on the floor and put out his shirt front, which was just beginning to blaze. Then Joe Twemlow and Jack the policeman carried him up to bed between them, and Uncle Eli went off for a doctor, asking Jane to accompany him, as he had forgotten where the doctor lived after thirty years. And Uncle Eli having gone, old Mrs. Twemlow denounced the Whympennys in such unmeasured terms that old Mr. Whympenny requested her to leave the house, and Joe interfered and said he wouldn't have his mother insulted; and the family row was at its height, when Uncle Eli and Jane returned with the doctor, and it raged so furiously that at last he lost his temper, and declaring that he would no longer be a bone of contention, seized his bag and strode off to the Railway Station and returned to London by the evening train, much to the mortification of the Twemlows, whose mortification was increased when it was found that Jane Whympenny, having to be back home that evening, was compelled to travel to London by the same train.

\* \* \* \* \*

A month later Uncle Eli was on the platform at Euston Square. He was going to sail for America. All his relations had gathered to see him off. He had been generous to them all, but they were none of them satisfied. Old Mrs. Twemlow had offended her brother for ever by saying that he ought to be put in a lunatic asylum or Chancery, she wasn't sure which. Mrs. Dodson had offended him by suggesting that he should put his money in a bank over here, and her husband would send him some out when he wanted it. Sam Green had offended him by telling him that he had put twenty-five pounds on a horse because he thought it was a certainty, and it had been beaten by a head, and as the bet was booked in his



name he would have to give him, Sam, the twenty-five pounds to pay up with ; and Joe Twemlow had offended him by continually telling the tale about the wife of forty-two who poisoned the old gentleman of sixty. The only person who hadn't offended him was Mary Twemlow, who told him straight to his face that she didn't want anything of him, but that she liked him because he was a kind-hearted good old man and Joe's uncle.

I beg pardon, there was one other person who had not offended him, and she was not at the Station to see him off.

Nobody could make it out.

"Where's Jane?" they said. "After the way she's set her cap at Uncle Eli, it's a wonder she isn't here."

The only person who knew why Jane Whympenny wasn't there was her sister, Mary Twemlow, and she said nothing.

But three days afterwards the whole family knew it. A letter was received from Uncle Eli, posted at Liverpool, and it announced that previous to his leaving London Jane Whympenny had honored him by becoming Jane Furlong, and that she had gone to Liverpool by a different train, and that the happy couple were now on their way to America.

The Twemlows were terribly disgusted. The Dodsons said it was a barefaced robbery. The Whympennys consoled themselves with the fact that Uncle Eli had, after all, been secured by one of the family. If Uncle Eli should return from America again, the Whympennys may possibly speak to him—but the Twemlows and the Dodsons—Never!



## THE SUICIDE'S LEGACY.

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ON the night of the 14th of November, 1882, the entire Metropolis was wrapped in a dense fog. It had come on about four in the afternoon, and had rapidly increased in density until locomotion became almost impossible. As the warehouses and shops closed their shutters the last rays of light seemed to vanish from the thoroughfares, and the cries of belated wayfarers were heard in every direction. The omnibusses had ceased running at seven o'clock. Here and there a cabman, preceded by men with flaming torches, endeavored to convey a fare, who offered an exorbitant price, to a railway station or to his home, but the task was one both of difficulty and of danger, difficulty because it was impossible even by the aid of the torches to recognize streets or turnings—danger, because the cab was as often on the pavement as off it.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening when Captain George Carlyon, of the Cape Mail Service, found himself, to the best of his belief, in Hyde Park. A man with whom he had collided had told him that he was in Hyde Park, and that if he kept straight on and hugged the rails, he would presently find himself at the Marble Arch.

Captain Carlyon had arrived that day with his ship at the West India Docks. On the voyage home a peculiar adventure had befallen him. A few days after they left Natal, a saloon passenger had requested an interview with him. The passenger was a young man, of gentlemanly manners, who had taken his berth in the name of Robert Howard. Mr. Howard, when he came on board, seemed



very unwell. He had not appeared at the public table once, alleging indisposition, and he had remained continually in his cabin. When Captain Carlyon received Mr. Howard's message he went to him and found him in a state of great depression.

"Captain," he said, "I have a presentiment that I shall not live to reach England. If I do not, I wish you to deliver all the property about me, together with a letter which I will give you, to a relative of mine in London. Will you ease my mind by undertaking this task for me?"

"My dear sir," replied the captain, "I am sorry to find you a prey to such gloomy forebodings. Let me send the doctor to see you."

"No doctor can do me any good, and I decline to see one," exclaimed the passenger, a little irritably. "I don't say that I am going to die, but if I should, will you do as I ask?"

"Certainly, but——"

"Thank you," said the passenger, without waiting for the Captain to conclude the sentence. "Here is the letter. My luggage of course you will take possession of should anything happen."

Robert Howard drew from his breast pocket, as he spoke, a long, sealed envelope, and handed it to the Captain, who read the address—

Miss May Summers,

No. —, Pembroke Square,

Kensington.

"You'll give me your solemn promise that you will do as I ask?" said Robert Howard, fixing his eyes steadily upon the Captain's face.

"I give you my solemn promise; but if when we arrive at our destination you should be alive and well?"

"Then you will hand the letter to me, but not until the very last moment, as I quit the ship for the shore."

Captain Carlyon assured Mr. Howard that his strange



request should be faithfully carried out, and expressing a hope that the invalid would soon recover his spirits and feel better, he left him, and taking the letter into his cabin locked it carefully away with his own private papers.

Late that night, after the bulk of the passengers had retired to rest, a sudden cry was raised by the lookout man :

“A man overboard.”

Instantly all was confusion. There was a rush to the side of the vessel—the engines were stopped, the men prepared to lower the boats, but nothing could be discovered.

“Are you certain you saw a man go overboard?” exclaimed the Captain, as he anxiously scanned the surface of the sea.

“Positive, sir. He was a standing there, leaning over the bulwarks—all of a sudden he climbed up, and was over. I saw him go, and heard the splash. He seemed to go down like a lump of lead.”

It was a calm night, and a boat was lowered instantly. The men rowed about in every direction, but no trace of the missing man was to be seen.

After remaining until it was certain that no hope was possible, the Captain reluctantly gave orders to proceed.

In the meantime the officers had made a search of the vessel to endeavor to find out who the passenger was. The task was not a difficult one. Mr. Robert Howard's cabin was found to be empty. Lying on the little table in his berth was a letter addressed to the Captain.

Captain Carlyon opened it at once and read it.

“Sir,—I have committed suicide. I charge you as a gentleman, and a man of honor, to deliver the letter in your possession, unopened to the person to whom it is addressed. There is nothing in it which will tell you more than you already know—that Robert Howard, of Natal, has committed suicide on the high seas. Open the hand-bag in my cabin.”



Captain Carlyon felt that there was no good to be done by opening the sealed letter, and he was reluctant to disobey the wish of the dead man. But he felt that a painful task was in store for him when he presented the letter to this young lady, who was probably a relative, or perhaps the sweetheart of the suicide.

He duly entered all the particulars of the occurrence, to report to the authorities on his arrival, and, having taken charge of the deceased man's effects, he endeavored to banish the tragic occurrence from his mind.

On one point his mind was set at rest when he opened the hand-bag in the suicide's cabin. It contained a legally drawn document, duly signed and witnessed, in the shape of a will, by which Robert Howell (otherwise Howard) left all the property he might die possessed of to May Summers, at present residing at No.—, Pembroke-square, Kensington.

"Howell (otherwise Howard)," said the Captain. "The man has evidently been going under two names—I wonder whether that has anything to do with his suicide."

When Captain Carlyon reached London, on the 14th of November, he duly reported the affair to the authorities, and deposited the will and the boxes of the deceased passenger with the owners, there to remain until Miss May Summers claimed them.

But the letter was a different matter. This he had solemnly promised the dead man to deliver himself. Business detained him in the city until late in the afternoon, and then, having no relatives in London to visit, he set out for South Kensington.

He managed, by taking the Underground Railway, to overcome the difficulty of the fog, and he found the house in Pembroke-square. But on knocking, and enquiring for Miss May Summers, he was informed that the young lady no longer resided there. The gentleman who



answered his inquiries, informed him that Miss Summers had been in his employment for the last three years as resident governess, but that she had been dismissed a month since, and he did not know what had become of her.

The gentleman not seeming anxious to prolong the interview the Captain left, and thus experienced a rebuff at the first attempt to find the suicide's heiress.

"I suppose I'd better take the letter back to the owners," he said to himself, "and let them find the young lady. I can't go hunting about London for her."

He began to think over the details of the curious adventure in which he found himself involved, and thinking, he forgot all about the fog, and instead of going to the Kensington Railway Station, lost himself, wandered about, and eventually found himself at eight o'clock in the evening wandering about Hyde Park, utterly lost and for a long time utterly unable to find anyone who could put him right.

The one man he had met—the man with whom he had collided so violently, had told him to follow the railings and he would get to the Marble Arch, but he didn't know that that would be any particular advantage to him, for the Marble Arch is not Highbury, and it was at Highbury that the Captain lodged when in town. Still, once through the Marble Arch, he would be in a main thoroughfare, and so he went cautiously on, choked with the soot-laden fog, his eyes smarting and tingling, and hands numbed with the icy coldness of the rails which he grasped as a guide.

Plunging forward in the darkness, he suddenly stumbled and came to a full stop. His foot had struck against something lying on the ground. The stumble brought him almost down on his knees. Putting out his hands to save himself, he was horrified at discovering that it was a body lying in his path. Passing his hands rapidly over it he found by the dress that it was a woman,



Whether she was young or old, well dressed or poorly clad, it was too dark to see, but she was a woman and the Captain could not leave her lying there.

He took her gently by the arm and shook her. "Hi, my good woman, what's the matter?" he exclaimed.

No answer.

"My God, suppose she should be dead," he said to himself. He couldn't leave the poor creature lying there all through the foggy night, but what was he to do? He shouted, but no answer came. Then he knelt down again and felt as best he could for the woman's heart.

It was beating.

Then he shouted again—shouted with all the strength of his lungs, "Help! help! help!"

Presently he heard the sound of footsteps, and a voice crying "What is it—where are you?"

"Here," he cried, "this way; there's a woman lying on the ground here."

The sound of the voices came nearer, and presently two policemen with their lanterns stood beside him.

Their lanterns threw out but a weak little ray of light against the density of the fog, but when that ray rested upon the woman's face the three men started back with a cry of pity.

Lying senseless on the pathway before them was a young and beautiful girl. Her face was deadly white, her eyes were closed, but the features were unmistakably those of a refined and delicate lady. She was dressed plainly but neatly, and her hat, which had fallen off, had allowed a wealth of wavy brown hair to escape from its confinement, and form, as it were, a dark frame to the pale beautiful face.

One of the policemen looked anxiously at her face and neck as the other held the lantern.

"No," he said, presently, "I don't think she's been knocked down or attacked, it looks more as if she'd fainted. Hi, miss!"



Still there was no answer.

The men between them lifted the poor girl to her feet, and one of them, taking her gloves off, began to rub her hands, which were like ice.

Presently the girl opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she moaned feebly.

"You're all right, Miss," said one of the policemen kindly. "Did you faint?"

"Yes—yes. I was frightened, and I was faint, and I—"

"Where do you live, Miss?"

The girl looked from one to the other with a dazed expression. It was evident that her senses were only gradually returning.

"Yes, where do you live? We'll see you home."

"I have no home," cried the girl; then, putting her hands up, and covering her face, she began to sob.

The heart of the sailor was touched to the core.

"My dear young lady," he said, "pray tell us where you live; we can't leave you here."

"Yes," she moaned "you must, you must."

"Poor thing," said the policeman, "she seems weak and ill. Come, Miss, we can't leave you. Would you like to go to the station and see our doctor?"

"The station—the police station? Oh, no, no."

The wail of the terrified girl rang out upon the night air.

"My dear young lady," cried Captain Carlyon, the tears coming into his honest sailor eyes, "you are evidently in some great trouble. Is there nowhere you can let them take you? You are not fit to go alone on such a terrible night as this. Is there any way that I can assist you?"

"We'd better take her to the station, sir," said one of the policemen. She'll be taken care of there till the morning. Perhaps she'll tell us when we get her there.



‘No, no, don’t take me there,’ cried the girl, ‘I have done nothing wrong. I will tell you all I can, and you must let me go. You have no right to detain me.’ She tried to withdraw her arms from those of the men who were supporting her, but was incapable of the effort.

‘You must have some friends,’ suggested the Captain, ‘some one who could give you shelter on a night like this.’

‘Friends,’ moaned the girl bitterly. ‘No, I have no friends. I am a governess, a governess out of a situation—a governess with no money left to pay for her lodgings.’

‘Well, Miss,’ said the policeman in a kindly voice, you can tell us what your name is, and where your last place was. You see we find you here fainting in the park, and——’

‘Very well,’ replied the girl, her lips trembling and her eyes filling with tears, ‘I will tell you. My name is May Summers; until a month ago I was a governess at No.—, Pembroke Square——’

‘What!’ exclaimed Captain Carlyon, ‘you are May Summers—it—it seems impossible, and I have here in my pocket a letter for you that was given me——’

The policemen were standing open-mouthed, but the girl seemed scarcely to understand as Captain Carlyon felt in his breast pocket for the pocket-book containing the dead man’s legacy.

He thrust his hand in his pocket, and then gave a cry of surprise and horror.

The pocket-book was gone!

‘Great heavens!’ he exclaimed, ‘I had it just now. I must have lost it. I——’

He said no more. An exclamation from the policemen stopped him. The young lady had gone off again into a dead faint, and lay a helpless burthen on the shoulder of the big sergeant, who put his arm round her waist and half-carried her to one of the park seats a few feet away.



The next morning Captain Carlyon felt it his duty to tell the manager at the Company's office all that had happened on the previous evening.

He briefly narrated the extraordinary meeting with May Summers, his discovery of the loss of the pocket-book, and the way in which the difficulty as to what to do with the unfortunate girl had been solved by the kindness of the sergeant who had secured a room for her at a respectable coffee-house in the neighborhood, and placed her in charge of the landlady while Captain Carlyon had gone for a doctor and engaged him at once to attend to the interesting patient. The doctor reported that the young lady was evidently in a nervous and depressed condition, and was suffering from weakness and want of proper food. That was his opinion. He gave the landlady certain directions, ordered some nourishment to be given at once, and promised to come in again in the morning. Captain Carlyon was terribly distressed at the loss of the letter, the more especially as he was in absolute ignorance of its contents. By the advice of the firm he determined to seek an interview with Miss Summers as soon as she was able to receive him and to tell her the whole story.

The position was slightly an awkward one. Miss Summers was a young and beautiful girl, but according to her own account homeless and friendless. Single young sea captains and pretty young governesses out of a situation cannot have confidential interviews anywhere. The Captain at last hit upon an idea, which he felt would be a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. He went to his solicitors, placed the whole of the matter in their hands, and they wrote to Miss Summers asking her to make an appointment with them at their offices, on a matter of great importance to her.

Two days after the receipt of the letter Miss Summers was sufficiently recovered to call, and on being shown



into the private office she found Mr. Bates, the solicitor, and Captain Carlyon waiting to receive her.

May Summers did not recognize the Captain. She could scarcely have seen his face that foggy night had she been well, but, fainting and half-senseless as she was, she had taken no notice of the people about her.

"Miss Summers," said Mr. Bates, speaking in his softest professional manner, "this gentleman is Captain Carlyon, of the Cape Mail Steamer Ajax. On the voyage home he was entrusted with a letter for you by one of the passengers, a Mr. Robert Howard or Howell, I am not sure what the correct name was——"

Captain Carlyon was watching May Summers' face, and he was astonished to see the look of terror which came into it at the mention of the suicide's name.

"A letter for me!" she gasped, "from that man, and you have sent for me to tell me this."

She rose from the chair, her pale face flushing, her eyes bright with sudden passion.

"I have no doubt, sir, you meant kindly," she added, turning to Captain Carlyon, "but I absolutely decline to receive any communication of any kind from Mr. Robert Howell."

She rose and moved to the door. Mr. Bates looked at the Captain inquiringly. Should he tell her that the man was dead and the letter was lost?

Captain Carlyon felt that this was the only thing to do. It was an intense relief to his mind to find that the matter had turned out so well.

"Miss Summers," he said, "I feared that it would have been a great shock to you when I told you that in some unaccountable way I had lost that letter."

"Lost it!" exclaimed the girl.

"Yes, on the night of the 14th of November I called at the address Mr. Howard gave me in order to hand you the letter. You had left. On my way back I got lost in



the fog, and in some extraordinary way my pocket-book containing the letter must either have fallen or been taken from my pocket.

"How was the letter addressed?" asked Miss Summers anxiously.

"To Miss Summers, No. —, Pembroke Square, Kensington."

"My God! my God!" cried the girl, a look of terror coming suddenly into her face. "If he should have—if it should go there and be opened—if——. Oh!" she cried suddenly seeing that the solicitor and Captain Carlyon were both gazing at her in astonishment, "you must forgive me. You cannot know what this means to me. Tell me—this man—do you know where he is—where is he waiting to receive my answer?"

"Miss Summers," the Captain said gently, "Robert Howard expected no answer. He died on the voyage."

"Dead! Dead! Dead!"

The young lady repeated the words slowly, with a far-away look in her beautiful eyes. She seemed as though she were trying to realize what they meant to her.

"He died suddenly on the voyage," the Captain continued, anxious to get his story done. "After he had given me the letter to you, a will was found in his cabin leaving everything to you. The property he had with him and all the papers found in his cabin are at your disposal at the office of the company."

She seemed hardly to follow what the Captain said.

"Dead," she murmured. "Dead. God be more merciful to him than he was to others."

"He was a relative of yours, Miss Summers, I presume?" said the solicitor.

"Yes," replied the young lady; "he was." Then rising from her chair she looked at Captain Carlyon.

"Captain Carlyon," she said, quietly, "I thank you for your kindness. The news which you have brought



me will necessitate my having legal advice." Then, turning to Mr. Bates, she added: "I know no one in London—may I tell you my story, and ask you to act for me?"

"Certainly, my dear young lady."

The Captain saw at once that he was *de trop*—the story was not for his ears. He rose at once, bowed to Miss Summers, telling the solicitor that he would be back in an hour and finish his business with him.

He went out into Lincoln's Inn Fields, and, lighting a cigar, strolled up and down. He had plenty to occupy his thoughts. For the first time in his life he found himself connected with a mystery and a romance, and he was young enough to appreciate both. He wondered what it all meant, this mysterious letter, the suicide at the dead of night, the young lady lying homeless and friendless in the lonely park. There was plenty of food for thought in these incidents, but when he began to ponder over all that occurred subsequently—the loss of the letter, Miss Summers' disinclination to receive it, and then her terror lest it should have fallen into other hands, and her strange expression when she learned that Robert Howard—or as she called him Robert Howell—was dead—he felt that the solution of the mystery was beyond him. He failed to make the incidents fit in with any theory that he could form.

One thing the Captain felt must be done at once, and that was to advertise in a guarded way, offering a reward for the recovery of the letter, if, of course, it had not been picked up by some one who had delivered it at the address it bore on the envelope.

He had not thought of inquiring there. Miss Summers' terror, lest it should have gone there at once showed him his folly at not having inquired there at once.

He had an hour to spare. Why should he not set all doubt on that score at rest before seeing his solicitor again.



He took a cab, and bade the man drive him to Kensington as fast his horse could take them.

A servant answered the door, and the Captain inquired for the master of the house.

“What name shall I say, sir?”

“Captain Carlyon. Say the gentleman who called the other evening to inquire for Miss Summers.”

After being kept for about five minutes in the hall, the Captain was shown into a little library.

The master of the house—his name Captain Carlyon ascertained was Redmond—came in quickly and closed the door.

“Now, sir,” he said, “what is it you want with me? I told you the other night I knew nothing of Miss Summers’ whereabouts, and I fail to understand why I should be annoyed in this way.”

“I beg your pardon,” said the Captain, rather angrily, for Mr. Redmond’s manner was brusque to a degree, “I fail to see where the annoyance is.”

“Do you, sir? Then I will tell you. I object to be bothered with questions about my discharged servants.”

“Miss Summers was hardly your servant, sir,” replied the Captain. “She was a governess. She is, I am sure, a lady.”

“She was discharged, sir, her wages were paid, and I have nothing further to do with her.”

“Of course not. You may be surprised to hear the poor girl of whom you speak so brutally has been seriously ill—that she is homeless and friendless.”

“What the deuce has that to do with me, sir?”

“That I cannot say,” said the Captain, “unless I learn for what reason you dismissed her, and why you are so bitter against her.”

“Indeed; and who are you, pray, sir; one of her lov——?”

Before the word had left his lips Captain Carlyon had stopped him with an oath.



“Mr. Redmond,” he exclaimed fiercely, “I don’t know much about you, but you are a blackguard.”

“Leave my house, sir.”

“With pleasure, when you have answered me one question,” answered the Captain. “Miss Summers was discharged by you a month since. Three nights ago she was found fainting of weakness and starvation in the Park. How she came there on such a night I have yet to learn.”

“What she did after she left my house has nothing to do with me.”

“That remains to be seen. In the meantime if you can control your temper and try to behave like a gentleman for a moment or two, perhaps you’ll answer me one question.”

“Well?”

“*What have you done with the letters that have been delivered here for Miss Summers since she left?*”

Captain Carlyon put the question in that way without knowing why he did so.

It must have been his honest sailor’s indignation at the man’s conduct that made him assume the fact that he had had letters. It was an arrow shot in the dark, but it hit the mark.

The man flushed crimson to the roots of his hair.

“There have been no letters,” he stammered, “and now get out.”

The insult was brutal ; at another time the sailor would have resented it, but, convinced that he had traced the lost letter home to Miss Summers’ late employers, he forgot everything else.

“I am going,” he said ; “but you will hear from me again. A letter for Miss Summers has been sent here within the last two days—a letter which was either taken from me, or which I dropped—and, unless you restore it, untampered with, to me within the next four and twenty hours, it’ll be bad for you.”



The Captain went on without the slightest idea of what he was going to do, but he knew he was dealing with a coward, and so assumed a bullying tone.

"No letter has been received, sir," replied Mr. Redmond, recovering his calmness, "and if I am annoyed by any further visits from you or anyone else connected with this young woman I shall make it a police matter. There's the door. Good-morning."

The Captain gave the man a contemptuous glance, and walked out of the house with as much dignity as he could assume.

Half an hour later he was ushered into Mr. Bates' private office—Miss Summers had just left.

"My dear Carlyon," exclaimed the solicitor, "this is a most extraordinary affair. The story this young lady has told me is one of the strangest I ever listened to in all my professional experience. Do you know what the relationship was to this man whose letter she refused to receive?"

"His cousin—his sister, perhaps," suggested the Captain.

"His wife!"

"His wife?" cried the Captain, "and she calls herself Miss Summers, and——"

"There was a reason. Do you know who this Robert Howard was?"

"How should I?"

"You are right—how should you—how should anybody, seeing that it was to his interest to conceal his identity?"

"Wasn't his real name Robert Howard then?"

"No; he must have assumed that name abroad. His real name was Robert Howell."

"Howell, Howell," said the Captain, "I remember something about that name now."

"Naturally. Robert Howell was the name of the man



accused of the murder of a woman who was found dead in the brougham in which she had driven with a gentleman from the Alhambra to her house in St. John's Wood. The man stopped the coachman half-way and got out, telling him to drive his mistress home. When the brougham stopped at the door, the coachman, surprised that his mistress did not alight, got down and spoke to her. Receiving no answer, he became alarmed, and found that she was dead. A handkerchief saturated with chloroform was found lying in the carriage—the poor woman had died from the effects of the forced inhalation. She had evidently struggled, but had been overpowered before she could raise an alarm. The man who left the Alhambra with her was identified by accident. When he alighted from the brougham he left behind him something which had fallen from his pocket in the struggle. It was a meerschaum pipe, which was in a case. The pipe had evidently been repaired, and inside the case was a piece of paper with his name on, evidently placed there by the pipe repairer, for identification."

"I remember the case now," exclaimed Captain Carlyon, "the woman was called Belle Fullerton. Her murderer was never captured."

"No; it is evident now that he got away to the Cape. But the murderer of Belle Fullerton was Robert Howell, and the poor girl to whom you carried his dying message, the girl who calls herself May Summers, was, God help her, the murderer's unhappy wife."

Captain Carlyon heard the solicitor's extraordinary story to the end without an interruption, without an exclamation.

"What do you think of it?" asked Mr. Bates as he finished.

"I don't know," replied the Captain. "You see, Bates, old fellow, all my adventures have been with the elements—not with men and women. This is such a new



experience for me that I'm out of my bearings. If what you tell me is correct, Miss Summers is the lawful wife of the man who gave me a letter addressed to her just before he committed suicide, and that man was a murderer."

"That is so."

"And I find the young lady and lose the letter at the same time."

"Yes; that was an awkward business. We ought to try to recover that letter. It may contain statements which it would not be advisable for strangers to see. I mean, of course, for my client's sake."

"Bates," said the Captain, "I believe that letter has been picked up and delivered at Pembroke Square, and that Miss Summers—I must call her by that name still—being absent, her employer, Mr. Redmond, has taken possession of it."

"Good gracious, man, what makes you think that?"

"I've just come from Pembroke Square. I've seen the man, and I've come to that conclusion. I've got the idea in my head, and it means to stop there."

"But what motive should he have in concealing the fact?"

"I don't know. Perhaps Miss Summers can throw a little light on the subject. Has she told you where she is to be found?"

"I have arranged where she shall go for the present. I have induced her to be my wife's guest for a few days, until something can be done for her. I'm rather interested in her."

"So am I," exclaimed the Captain; then catching the solicitor's keen eye fixed on him, he colored and stammered, "She's a charming girl, and hers is a sad story, and——"

The solicitor smiled.

"Take care, Carlyon," he said kindly; "you sailors



are terribly impressionable, and we've only Miss Summers's side of the story yet."

"I'd stake my life upon her goodness," said the Captain warmly. Then he added sharply, "Don't be an idiot, Bates. Can't a fellow take an interest in a friendless girl without falling in love with her?"

"Some fellows can—steady-going old fogies, married men like myself; but when the lady's young and pretty, and a widow—it's dangerous for handsome sea-captains to make experiments."

Captain Carlyon muttered something about "nonsense," but the solicitor's harmless chaff had aroused him to the fact that he did feel a strong personal feeling in the young lady's fortunes already.

"What is she going to do about the property lying at the office?" he said, to turn the conversation. "I suppose it ought to be handed over to her."

"No; she refuses absolutely to have anything to do with it. But she is very anxious that the letter entrusted to you shall be recovered, because she fears that the secret of her relationship to the murderer of Belle Fullerton may be revealed to the world by its falling into other hands."

"Then, by heaven, I'll have it again!" exclaimed the Captain. "That man Redmond has it, and he shall give it to me, or say what he's done with it."

"Steady, steady, Carlyon; don't let your valor run away with your discretion. First of all we must find out from Miss Summers a little more about her late employer. She may be able to give us a clue upon which we can act."

. . . . .

On the following evening Captain Carlyon dined by invitation at his solicitor's house.

There he met Miss Summers, to whom the solicitor's wife had already taken a great fancy. After dinner Mr.



Bates spoke in the highest terms of the Captain, and assured the young lady that she might confide in him. It was really necessary that she should if she wished the missing letter to be traced.

After a little encouragement Miss Summers told as much of the story as the Captain needed to know.

Left when only sixteen by the death of her father, a half-pay naval officer, alone and friendless, she had fled to that refuge of the penniless, educated gentlewoman, a governess agency. Then she obtained a situation as governess in the family of a Mrs. Redmond. She was engaged to take charge of the only child, a little girl of six. Mr. Redmond was the secretary to a wealthy Benevolent Institution, and his wife had a good income of her own, but unfortunately had developed a habit of secret drinking, which caused her husband great annoyance and made the home an unhappy one. Soon after May Summers had accepted the position offered to her, she found out the state of affairs. She would have resigned at once but she had conceived a great attachment to the child, a lovable gentle little creature, who, neglected by her mother, and treated with but scant affection by her father, clung to the new governess with all a child's eagerness for sympathy and love.

May Summers had not been long in the house before she discovered from the servants and from her mistress's maudlin confidences, what was the original cause of the unhappiness of the home. Mr. John Redmond was a selfish and unprincipled man of pleasure. His young wife had discovered, soon after her marriage, that her income and not herself was the cause of his wooing. One day the bitter truth was forced upon her that the evenings her husband spent from home, and which he explained were occupied with "business," were really devoted to his own amusements, and that he was a regular patron of those places which are the resort of "fast" men and "fast" women.



The unhappiness at home reached its height when the unfortunate wife acquired convincing proof that her husband had made the acquaintance of a woman named Belle Fullerton, a notorious demi-mondaine, and that he had made her several costly presents of jewelry. From that moment the unfortunate wife, loving her husband too well to leave him, too weak-minded to strive by force of character to win him back, took to drowning her sorrow in drink.

May Summers, then barely twenty, was horrified and shocked when this new phase of life was opened up to her. She pitied the neglected wife and tried all she could to save her, but her efforts were in vain. But the woman clung to her, trusted her, loved her, and implored her not to leave her. So for the sake of the mother and the child the young girl stayed on.

It was after she had been with the Redmonds about two years, that Robert Howell became a visitor at the house. It was evident that he and Mr. Redmond had some business connection by the way they conversed. Gradually Mr. Redmond began to be more at home of an evening, and then Robert Howell would come to dinner and stay.

It was about this time that Robert Howell one day asked May Summers to be his wife. They had seen a good deal of each other, and when Howell came to stay with the Redmonds they were constantly in each other's company. Howell was a good-looking, agreeable fellow—an educated man of the world—and always showed the greatest consideration for the poor governess's feelings. On many an occasion she felt grateful to him for little delicate acts of forethought and kindness, and seeing no one else, it was but natural that she should come in time to be thankful for the young man's society.

Her position at the time was a painful one. Mrs. Redmond had gone from bad to worse and her husband talked sometimes of putting her into a private asylum for



dipsomaniacs. In the event of his being able to do this, he said the little girl would be sent to a boarding-school. When, therefore, one afternoon, when they were alone in the long garden—the child having gone into the house—Robert Howell urged his suit—passionately—begged the friendless girl to be his wife, and painted their future in glowing colors—was it any wonder, with only the prospect of a lifelong drudgery before her, that she consented?

From that day they were an engaged couple. One thing only Robert stipulated — that the engagement should be kept secret from Mr. Redmond for business reasons. The girl was quite agreeable to this. She felt that anything else would make her position awkward in the house, and she wished to stay on as long as she could with her little pupil.

Two months after they had been engaged, Robert proposed a secret marriage. He urged that at any moment he might have to start at a couple of days' notice for the Colonies. The scheme which was to make his fortune was nearly ripe—only a little more capital had to be found, and then he would have to go abroad at once. There might not be time then for the formalities for the marriage. Why should he not give notice to the registrar now? They would only have to go out for a walk one morning, step into a little room and be married, and come back again, and nobody would be any the wiser. He would not claim her until they sailed together for the new world.

To this, after a little demur, May Summers agreed. Robert urged his wish in so plausible a manner, his reasons were so good—at any rate they prevailed—and one fine morning an old gentleman at a desk mumbled a few words in the presence of two witnesses, hired at two shillings and sixpence a head, and Robert Howell and May Summers took each other for man and wife, and he went on to the city, and she went back to Pembroke Square just as if nothing had happened,



They saw a good deal of each other, of course, for Robert now lived with the Redmonds, but never by look or word did they betray their secret.

A week after she had become Robert Howell's wife, May Summers accidentally overheard a conversation between her husband and employer. The household had retired to rest. The men were alone in the library. May had occasion to go downstairs to the dining-room to fetch the keys which her mistress had left there.

As she passed the door she heard words which glued her to the spot. She didn't wish to listen, but she was spell-bound.

"Stop that woman doing what she threatens," exclaimed Redmond, "or it will be the worse for both of us."

"She will not keep her threat," replied Robert Howell.

"She will ! She is a devil ! She has blackmailed me for months past. Do what you like, only settle the matter. Get those letters back."

"What can she do after all ?" urged Howell. "The worst will be to create a scandal. Your wife will do nothing—the Institution may dismiss you ; but you have an income still, and our scheme once floated——"

"Man, I tell you if that woman keeps her threat *we shall be ruined*. Our scheme never would be floated, for my name will be disgraced."

"I understand," exclaimed Robert Howell. "My God ! Redmond, what a fool you've been."

May Summers stayed to hear no more.

In the morning when she came down to breakfast her husband had left.

"Mr. Howell breakfasted early and left for the city with the master, Miss," said the servant.

That night Mr. Redmond returned to dinner alone. The evening passed and no Robert Howell. May began to get seriously anxious. That night she lay awake until



dawn, thinking a hundred things and blaming herself for imagining them.

The next morning Mr. Redmond was at breakfast when she got down. She ventured to ask if Mr. Howell was out of town.

“ Yes.”

The monosyllable was the only answer her employer vouchsafed her.

That afternoon while out for a walk with her pupil, the contents bill of the *Globe* caught her eye :—

“ Extraordinary Murder of a Woman ! ”

She bought the paper, and read the story of the new crime which had startled the metropolis. A woman named Belle Fullerton had been found murdered in her brougham. She had driven home with a gentleman from the Alhambra on the previous evening. He had left the the brougham halfway. When the carriage stopped at her door Belle Fullerton was dead.

When poor May Summers read the account the paper fell from her hands. She nearly fainted in the street.

But she summoned up all her strength and went back home. She remembered the conversation she had heard, and she felt convinced that Belle Fullerton had been got rid of by her husband at the instigation of Redmond. Belle Fullerton was the woman whose letters Mrs. Redmond had discovered in her husband's room.

From that hour May Summers never heard again of the man she had married. At the inquest it was proved that the woman, who had a weak heart, had died under the influence of chloroform. Mr. Redmond was called, for his knowledge of Robert Howell was soon made known to the police. He stated that Howell was to have sailed for Australia the day following the murder—that he had bidden him good-bye and taken his luggage with him. He was absolutely unaware of any reason why Howell should have murdered the woman. He admitted his own



acquaintance with the lady, but it had been broken off long ago.

Inquiries made at the docks had failed to prove that any person answering the description of Robert Howell had taken a passage. The inquest was adjourned and finally closed without any clue to the whereabouts of the supposed murderer, or the discovery of the motive of the crime. Mrs. Fullerton had a valuable diamond bracelet and diamond earrings on, and these were untouched. The motive could not have been robbery. It was therefore probably revenge or jealousy. The Coroner's jury found a verdict of wilful murder against Robert Howell, and then the matter gradually dropped out of general conversation and was forgotten.

The position of the young wife was terrible. What could she do? If she left the Redmonds she would be unable to get another situation. She felt that it would be an infamy to enter a family under a false name, and who would take her if they knew that she was the wife of an uncaptured criminal—an assassin at large.

So she stayed on, and suffered, and endured, avoiding Mr. Redmond as much as she possibly could, finding her only comfort in the child.

But although no word ever passed between them on the subject of Robert Howell, Miss Summers found that Redmond was suspicious of her. He thought she knew more than she ought to have done. The poor girl tortured herself over and over again with the thought that she ought to have made public what she did know. But she would have been a wife coming forward to prove her husband's guilt. That no one could expect her to do.

One day a climax came. Redmond, instead of avoiding her, took to courting her society. He tried to be friendly with her—to enlist her sympathy for his miserable position with a drunken wife. At last she could no longer be blind to the fact, that every feeling of honor



and self-respect demanded that she should quit his roof. It broke her heart to leave the wife, to part with the child ; but Redmond had made it impossible for her to stay.

Misfortune seemed to dog her footsteps. All the money she had in the world—the twenty pounds she had managed to save from her paltry salary—was stolen from her the day she drew it out in order to go down into a country town where she had been sent by an agency. She had conquered her scruples as to concealing her name. She had one more chance from an agency—she could have secured the place—to whom could she refer ? To the drunken, almost imbecile wife, or the husband—the man she loathed and detested—the man to speak whose very name aloud now brought the burning blood to her cheek.

She hesitated—the lady to whom she was to be governess noticed it—the girl burst into tears—that was enough. The lady feared Miss Summers would not suit her.

A month of hopeless despair, a month of agony of mind, and then slow starvation of body—everything parted with to raise the rent of one room, and then, the story is as old as the hills, and yet told again day after day in the great cities, the choice of three things, the workhouse, the street, or the river !

The first day that she was homeless, she hardly realized the situation. She knew that she was hungry, that her limbs ached, that her brain reeled. She knew that when night came on, terrified at the fog, numbed with the cold, weak, helpless, and hopeless, she fainted and fell. And Captain Carlyon knew all the rest. Such was the story which, little by little, Carlyon and the solicitor gathered and pieced together from May Summers' own lips.

That night when they were alone in the smoking room, the Captain and the solicitor decided on their line of action.



The first thing the solicitor did was to advertise that a letter addressed to Miss May Summers had been lost, probably in Hyde Park, and to offer a reward to anyone restoring it. Two days afterwards a working man called at the office. Going to his work through the Park on the morning of the 15th of November (the 14th was the foggy night) he had picked up a letter lying on the ground, together with a pocket-book and some loose papers.

He had put them all together and had taken them to the only address he could discover, that on the letter. A gentleman had taken the letter and said that it was all right. He could identify the gentleman, for he had given him five shillings for his trouble.

Captain Carlyon remembered that after calling at Pembroke Square the first time he had placed the pocket-book which he had in his hand, having taken the letter from it, in the outside breast pocket of his overcoat. This would account for its having fallen out when he nearly measured his length on the ground, after his violent collision with another belated wayfarer.

The working man's address was taken, and the next day Mr. Bates went with him to Kensington. Mr. Redmond was coming out of the door as they arrived.

"That's the gentleman I gave the letter and the pocket-book to!" exclaimed the man, and Redmond, jumping at once to the situation, turned deadly pale.

The man was dismissed, and Mr. Redmond instantly conducted the solicitor to his room.

"Mr. Redmond," said Mr. Bates, "I am Miss Summers' solicitor. Unless you instantly hand over the letter and the pocket-book you received, I shall apply for a summons against you, and the whole story of the man who wrote that letter may be revealed, together with your share in the transaction. What do you intend to do?"

Redmond hesitated.



“And if I have destroyed the letter accidentally?”

“Then you can explain that to the magistrate. Remember you have denied the possession of that letter to Captain Carlyon.”

“I will be frank with you, sir,” said Mr. Redmond. “This letter has come into my possession, and I have opened it. I have learned from it that Miss Summers was the wife of this Robert Howell. As she has concealed the fact so far, I think I am right in presuming that she doesn’t particularly wish it proclaimed to the world now!”

“Go on, sir.”

“That is the first point. The second is that while this letter contains information of great value to Miss Summers, it also contains statements which are highly injurious to me.”

“Go on.”

“Now, if I confess that I have not destroyed the letter, for reasons of my own, and I agree to give it up, will you pledge yourself not to use the portions which are injurious to me?”

The solicitor thought the matter over.

“Mr. Redmond,” he replied, “you are clever man. I agree to your terms so far as this: If the information in the letter is of great value to my client, I will guarantee that the part affecting you shall not be used, providing I am not, by so doing, doing anything derogatory to my professional status.”

“That is sufficient. I will bring the letter to your office this afternoon.”

. . . . .

That afternoon the lost letter was in the solicitor’s possession. He did not read it; he took it at once to the lady to whom it was addressed.

With a trembling hand May Summers drew the letter of her dead husband from its enclosure and read it.



This is the message Robert Howell had sent to his wife by George Carlyon :

“May—When you read this I shall be dead. I had intended to come back to England and give myself up and face the result, but my courage failed me. I am a miserable coward—I have been a coward all my life. But before I die I want to make you all the reparation I can for the misery I have done you. When I married you I thought you were just the kind of woman who would make me a good wife, and help me in my fight with fortune. I wanted a good woman’s society and companionship, for I had been burthened in my young manhood with a bad woman. She robbed me and left me when I was only twenty-two, and I never expected to see her again. One day Redmond, the man who was associated with me in a big mining scheme, which we were going to make a fortune out of, asked me to see a woman who had a hold on him, and bargain for some letters of his which she threatened to make use of—letters in which, with the madness of a man infatuated with a bad woman, he had betrayed himself. He had tried to dazzle her with visions of the wealth which was to be his when his “scheme” came off, and in this wealth she was to share. It was one of those letters which hundreds of better men than he have written to women who have enslaved them, but had it been made public it would not only have ruined him, but given our scheme its death-blow. It betrayed the dishonesty of the whole thing.

“I arranged on his behalf to make her an offer. He wrote her a letter saying ‘his ambassador would call.’ When I arrived at the house she had gone to the Alhambra. I thought I might get her pointed out to me. It was most important I should see her that night. While I was walking about a woman passed me ; a woman, tall, beautiful, and elegantly dressed. Our eyes met—we both started. It was my wife !



“ ‘Don’t make a fuss here,’ she said, recovering herself in a moment. ‘My brougham’s outside, and I’m going home. I’m mad with the toothache!’

“ ‘I followed her, almost in a dream. We walked down to where her brougham was waiting. ‘Home,’ she said to the coachman.

“ ‘Well, Bob,’ she said, ‘we’ve met at last. You’ve forgotten the past—so have I. It’s a long time ago. Fancy my meeting you after all these years. I thought you were in America.’

“ ‘And I hoped that you were dead, and that we might never meet again,’ I said bitterly.

“ ‘Well, we have, and we’d better agree not to bother each other, eh, Bob? Don’t be cross to me to-night, for my toothache’s driving me mad!’

“ ‘She drew from her pocket a bottle of chloroform, and put some drops into her tooth.

“ ‘It’s the only thing that stops the pain,’ she said. Then she put the bottle back into her pocket.

“ ‘The carriage at that moment gave a violent jerk. The coachman, in avoiding a cab, had run into a post at the corner of a narrow street. My wife was thrown violently against the side of the carriage.

“ ‘I sat there like a man in a dream. I hadn’t known for certain that my wife was dead—I had hoped so. I had persuaded myself so, and I had married you, and there was I sitting by her side in her brougham. I had forgotten all about Redmond, all about Belle Fullerton.

“ ‘Suddenly she exclaimed :

“ ‘Bob, where can I see you to-morrow, and talk business? We may as well settle matters. I’ve just remembered it won’t do for you to come to my house to-night ; there’ll very likely be some one there.’

“ ‘Where is your house?’ I asked mechanically.

“ ‘She gave me the address. It was the address I had been to on behalf of Redmond.



“ ‘What name do you go by now?’ I asked, seizing her by the wrist.

“ ‘Belle Fullerton,’ she replied, quietly.

“ My exclamation of surprise evidently astonished her.

“ ‘What’s the matter?’ she asked.

“ Then the words bubbled from my lips. In my excitement I concealed nothing. I talked more to myself than to her. I was the ambassador. It was I—her husband—who was entrusted with the task of getting the damning letters from Redmond’s mistress.

“ My wife only laughed when she knew the truth, utterly callous, utterly heartless—it seemed to her a huge joke.

“ ‘Well, Bob,’ she said, ‘he couldn’t have chosen a better agent. We can make terms at once. I could have obtained money for these letters. If I give them to you, will you promise not to interfere with me?’

“ ‘Have you the letters with you?’

“ ‘Yes. Redmond’s quite capable of bribing my servant to get at them if I left them at home. He’s a clever man is Mr. Redmond, but I’m quite as clever.’

“ She gave a harsh little laugh, and took from a little ornamental bag she carried, a bundle of letters.

“ ‘There they are. Now is it a bargain?’

“ ‘Give them to me!’ I cried. ‘I’ll settle with him for these.’

“ I seized the letters; she endeavored to keep them.

“ ‘No,’ she said; ‘not till you agree to my terms.’

“ It was a short struggle. I was wild, fierce. I was maddened that this woman, my wife, should be what she was; that she should even dare to be alive.

“ Suddenly she let go the letters. ‘Oh!’ she cried. It must have been a fierce pang of pain in the nerve of the tooth. She put her hand in her pocket, drew out her handkerchief and put it to her face. Then she seemed to faint with the pain, and turning half round, let her head



fall in the corner with her handkerchief still pressed against her face.

“I had the letters. I was mad with rage, jealousy, I know not what. Stopping the carriage I jumped out, and said to the coachman, ‘Home.’

“That night, late, I saw Redmond and gave him the letters. To quarrel with him would have been useless. To tell him that his mistress was my wife would have blistered my tongue. I told him nothing, except that circumstances had happened which would prevent me remaining under his roof another hour. I fetched my portmanteau down and put it on the cab and drove away. I could not see you. I wanted to get away—to think over what I should do, and then write to you.

“I slept that night at Charing Cross Hotel, the next morning I left by the mail and went abroad. I wanted to get away where there was life. Anywhere to think what I should do. And then I read in the English papers that Belle Fullerton had been found in her brougham dead. That a handkerchief saturated with chloroform had been found on the floor of the carriage, and that the man who was with her had jumped out of the brougham hastily, halfway to her house, and that I was the man.

“I guessed at once that the bottle must have broken in her pocket with the jar of the collision which threw her up against the side of her carriage. I surmised she must have held the saturated handkerchief to her mouth, and that when she fainted the side of the carriage kept it fastened over her nostrils and mouth, and that this, with her weak heart, killed her.

“But the evidence against me was damning. She was my wife—I had married another woman—I had leapt out of the carriage—I had fled from England.

“I was a coward then, as I always have been. There was no witness of what really occurred—the evidence was enough to hang me. I felt the rope round my neck.



"I left my hiding-place and made for Spain, then I went to Lisbon. From Lisbon I reached the Cape. Why need I weary you with my history. I prospered and no one recognized me in the wild parts I went to. By a lucky coup I made a fortune, but it was all no use to me.

"Then I determined to come back to England and give myself up and tell the truth. Should I be believed? No! Then I should be hanged. May, I was a coward to the last. The very idea of landing in England drove me mad with fear. I shall give this letter—a letter written before I set sail—to the Captain, and then I shall end a life which has been a curse to myself and a curse to others.

"The fortune I have made I leave to you. Don't think too badly of me. I wronged you, but you were saved from ever being really my wife—and with my dying breath I swear to you that I was innocent of the death of the wretched woman who marred my youth and cursed my manhood—Belle Fullerton."

. . . . .  
A year after the suicide's letter was placed in the hands of May Summers, May Summers became Mrs. Carlyon. Of the fortune left her by Robert Howell she refused to accept one penny for herself; but when it was realized she made the amount over to the Benevolent Institutions of England which befriend poor governesses, women of refinement and education, often reduced to the last miseries and torments of destitution.

And when Mrs. Redmond died and her wretched husband went to America for reasons which only transpired after his departure, May took the little girl whom she had grown to love as her own, and the one big wound in her heart was healed.

Captain Carlyon is the happiest of men. He has abandoned the sea, and the company have given him a splendid berth on shore. Sometimes, when he talks over with



Mr. Bates the events which brought him so much happiness, he says :

“Bates, old fellow, you knew I was going to fall in love with May before I did myself ; but who would have imagined that the letter poor Howell gave me before he went to his death was a letter of introduction to my wife !”



## THAT WICKED GIRL.

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“THAT wicked gal,” Mrs. Perkins called her, and really according to Mrs. Perkins, Mary was desperately wicked and deceitful above all things.

Mary didn't look wicked. If ever there was a wolf in sheep's clothing, always granting that Mrs. Perkins was right, and that she was a wolf, it was Mary.

Mrs. Perkins was the proprietress of that commodious and genteel looking double-fronted house which stands in the best position of the Marine Parade, Hastings, commands an excellent view of the sea, and can be thoroughly recommended for its comfort and its cleanliness and moderate charges; Mary is the housemaid, parlor-maid, nurse-maid, footman, light-porter and boots, all rolled into one. The only portion of the household duties of which Mary has not a considerable share is the cooking.

Prospect Mansion—“Mansion” is quite giving the “House” and the “Villa” the go-by now-a-days—has a reputation of being much affected by the élite of seaside visitors. Mrs. Perkins is very particular indeed about her lodgers, if I may apply so vulgar a term to the good lady's visitors, which is the word she generally uses herself. She has had some wonderful people occupying her rooms at different times; and having a reputation for taking “somebodies” she is not going to give it away by taking “anybodies.”

Mrs. Perkins' drawing-room floor was once occupied for a whole fortnight by a widow lady, whose brother



was a lord, and a relation of a member of the Government, and the day that the lord called upon the widow, and when Mary—of course “the wicked gal” had a dirty apron on, and had put the blacklead brush wrong side up across her face when wiping a bottle-fly from her brow with the back of her hand—when Mary, with dirty apron and blacklead face, said, “what name, please, sir?” and the gentleman replied, “Lord St. Jones,” Mrs. Perkins, who was coming upstairs with her apron full of cauliflowers to show the lady in the dining-room, dropped the lot in her confusion mingled with pride, and tearing her apron off, rushed to the door and exclaimed with a profusion of apologies, “This way, my lord, allow me to show your lordship.”

His lordship was a short, thin little man in baggy black trousers, and a tall hat that had turned brown with exposure to the weather, and he snorted and grunted a good deal while getting up the stairs and said “——” when he nearly broke his leg by falling over a dust-pan with the broom and the dust in it, which “that wicked gal”—just as if she’d done it on purpose, my dear—had left on the top stair, but he *was* a lord, and the old lady whom he had come to see was his sister, and a lord’s sister was in Mrs. Perkins’ drawing-room, which was an honor and a never-to-be-forgotten glory to Prospect Mansion, and all that appertained thereto.

The lord’s sister was the only approach to “the titled aristocracy” who had honored Prospect Mansion with their patronage, but there were many “good families,” including one stout lady with a very red face, who brought her own carriage with her—a yellow chariot, with red wheels, which was the envy of all the other householders in the terrace.

Mrs. Perkins never failed to feast her eyes upon that yellow chariot when it stood at her door. It showed the quality of the visitors who selected Prospect Mansion for



their temporary abode. It was true that the horse was rather thin, and stood with his front legs at such an angle that his front feet very nearly touched his hind feet, but that didn't take the yellow from the chariot, or the red from the wheels.

Mrs. Perkins had also among her regular clients many clerical families, and there is always something intensely respectable about the female relatives of the clergy. When clergymen's wives or widows take one floor in your house it really doesn't matter *who* has the other apartments. A bishop's wife in the drawing-room would neutralize even a young foreign lady with golden hair who smoked cigarettes in the dining-room.

There was a *Mr.* Perkins at Prospect Mansion, but he didn't matter much. Nobody ever paid the slightest attention to him, except when he was in the way downstairs, which he generally was. Mr. Perkins was a melancholy thin man of about forty-five. He was supposed to be in delicate health, which prevented him following any business. His one occupation in life was obliterating himself in his own house, and keeping the child quiet. The child was a little girl of six who was always with Mrs. Perkins when she was good, and always with Mr. Perkins when she was naughty, or when Mrs. Perkins had one of her bad headaches—a state of affairs by no means uncommon.

Very humble, very subdued, Mr. Perkins endeavored as far as possible to be invisible. He was afraid of everybody in the house.

Except Mary.

Even Mr. Perkins, who allowed himself to be crushed by the cook, and would step aside to allow the boy who came in for an hour of a morning to do the boots to pass, plucked up spirit enough to agree that Mary was “a wicked gal.”

Mr. Perkins had in early life been in service. It was



popularly rumored that he had been a coachman, or an under-gardener or something that necessitated a good deal of hat-touching, for this was a habit he could not break himself of—he never met any of his wife's lodgers—or shall we say “visitors?”—when he was out, but up went his forefinger to the brim of his hat, and when he had no hat on, and he met them indoors, in the passage or on the stairs, which was not often, up went his finger to the one lock of hair that still lingered, a silent witness of what had been, on his bald and shiny brow.

In addition to Mary and Mrs. Perkins and Mr. Perkins, and the little girl, the family contained an Irish cook of fiery temper and voluble utterance. “An excellent cook,” said Mrs. Perkins, “an indefatigable worker—but really, at times, *too* violent in her language to the tradespeople.” Mrs. Perkins confessed that the butcher boy was a fiend to stop and assist in every street fight of a morning, instead of bringing the meat in time for the middle day meals of her visitors, but it was most unfortunate that the bishop's lady should have had her window wide open just at the time that cook was informing “the fiend” in the strongest words of her vocabulary that he was a murtherin' blackguard, and calling upon the Saints to do him dire and bloodthirsty mischief.

It was in this delightful household that Mary Jones endeavored conscientiously to do her duty. She was a mild, amiable girl, who, after living a life of lodging-house slaveydom from the age of 12 to the age of 25, had come to the conclusion that what everybody said was right, and that she must be awfully stupid and awfully wicked. Like Topsey, she guessed that she was born so, for she tried her hardest to be good and to please, but somehow or other the fates were against her.

On the 17th of September, 1882, a day never to be forgotten in the life annals of Mary Jones, “the wicked gal” had been exceptionally wicked—all day long the



lower regions had echoed with cries of "Mary, you wicked gal, you've been and upset the gravy on the stair carpet." "Mary, you wicked gal, do you know that you've left your dust-pan on the drawing-room sofa?" "Mary, shure, its a saint from heaven that ye'd be aggravatin', and it's the misthress that ye're murtherin' with ye're wicked ways, and she as she is too." This was a delicate allusion on the part of the Irish Cook before missus to missus's health, and the approaching advent of another little Perkins.

Poor Mary had gone hot and cold, and trembled as her various delinquencies were pointed out to her. She had wept and sniffed, and declared more than once that she would go and "drownd" herself in the conveniently situated sea ; but for all that she had gone on with her work until she was dead beat, and, as she expressed it, "felt regularly sinking and all over alike."

The evening wound up with a little dispute between Cook and Mary, in which Cook loudly expressed her astonishment that Mary wasn't afraid of being struck dead for telling lies ; and then, as was her custom, Mrs. Perkins assembled her husband and domestics for family prayer, and prayed a long prayer at Mary with incidental minor prayers dropped in promiscuously for Mr. Perkins, who had declined to go out and send the niggers away because the little boys jeered him, a course of conduct which had induced the Cook to say that it would be a mercy if the expected little Perkins wasn't born black.

Prayers over, Mrs. Perkins retired to rest, Mr. Perkins went out in the back yard for his evening pipe, cook locked up the larder, and Mary having made everything ready for the morning, toiled wearily up to her attic, and utterly worn out threw herself on the bed undressed, and fell fast asleep.

Cook slept in the basement, and Mary occupied this little attic all by herself, so there was no one to call her a wicked girl for this disorderly proceeding.



How long Mary had been asleep she didn't know, but she woke with a sudden start, and sitting up on the bed, began to rub her eyes and wonder where she was. Somebody was knocking at the door.

"Yes," exclaimed Mary, jumping up, "what is it?" "Open the door," exclaimed Cook's voice, "sure it's missus as is took bad, and ye're to go for the doctor at once. Masther won't lave the misthress, she won't let him."

Mary was fortunately dressed, and was downstairs, and had her bonnet and shawl on in a minute. She thought master might have gone at such hour of the night, but she thought it would be wicked to say so, so off she sped towards the doctor's.

The doctor's house was in darkness. She felt very nervous about ringing him up, but she supposed doctors didn't mind, so she gave a gentle pull at the bell which, to her horror, clanged through the house. A window opened above and a head appeared, and the voice belonging to the head asked what was the matter.

"Please, sir, will you come to missus, she's took bad."

"And who is your missus?"

"Mrs. Perkins, sir, No. —, Marine Parade."

"All right, I'll be there directly."

Bang went the window down, and Mary delighted to think that she hadn't made any mistake, or been abused for knocking a gentleman up in the middle of the night, came down off the doorsteps and made the best of her way towards home.

When she got there she put her hand in her pocket for the key which she had brought with her, and to her horror failed to find it.

She turned everything out of her pocket again and again; she grew hot and cold.

The key was gone!

She must have dropped it somewhere in the road.



What should she do? Knock at the door and explain that she had lost the key. No, she daren't do that. It would upset the missus if she heard of it. Missus was awfully nervous of burglars, and at such a time as the present she mustn't be upset.

She must walk back the way she had come, and look for the key. There was no one about; the chances were that she would find it. If she left it till the morning someone would find it, perhaps a bad character, and come and let himself in when nobody was about, and walk off with the great coats and the umbrellas, perhaps with the tea-pots and the knives and forks.

So poor Mary, feeling more wicked than she had ever felt in her life, went back the way she had come, peering along the pavement, looking into the road, searching everywhere for the lost latchkey.

On the way she met the doctor. He was walking rapidly. Mary slipped aside, so that he should not notice her. He would get to the house first. They would wonder where she was. They would be sure to want her for something. If there was any work to be done, she was sure to be wanted. Whatever would they think had become of her?

Still, she must find the key. Her life would be a burden to her if she didn't. Cook was as nervous as missus—no one would go to sleep in the house if that latchkey was lying about Hastings.

It never occurred to the worried and badgered young woman that the lock could be altered. All she thought of was that she had committed another act of outrageous wickedness, and lost the key of the house.

She walked on rapidly, stopping to look at everything that gleamed or glistened in the moonlight. She picked up a hairpin, an old nail, and a pair of rusty scissors, but the latchkey was nowhere to be seen.

She reached the doctor's house, and then her heart gave a sudden bound for joy.



There, lying on the side of the step, was the latchkey.

She remembered pulling her handkerchief out while she was waiting for the bell to be answered. She must have dropped the key then.

She seized it eagerly, she felt inclined to kiss it and cry over it, but she mastered her emotion, and, clutching it firmly in her hand, was preparing to take to her heels and run as hard as she could when the doctor's front door opened and a ghost came out !

Yes, a ghost !

Mary was too horrified to faint—too paralyzed to shriek.

A long, tall figure dressed in white came gliding out of the door and passed quite close to her.

Mary shrank back against the wall and held her breath. But as the figure passed her she saw that the ghost had a human face—a beautiful face—the face of a young woman.

It glided on, across the road, and went slowly towards the parade.

Then Mary suddenly recognized the fact that it was not a ghost.

It was a young woman dressed in white.

But what on earth could a young lady be going on to the Parade for at two o'clock in the morning.

The figure reached the Parade, then stepped on to the beach, and went slowly down to the sea.

What was the strange young lady going to do? Mary's heart stood still.

The young woman had reached the edge of the waves—they were rolling up and wetting her feet.

Great Heavens, the young woman was walking on !—walking into the sea. She would be drowned.

Mary could never think how the sudden courage came, or what put it into her head to do what she did, instead of shrieking.



But a sudden strength seemed to take possession of her limbs—a nervous energy surged up in her brain.

With a little cry she ran forward and darted across the beach after the young woman.

She was too late.

The young woman was in the sea, the waters were closing over her.

None of us know how we should act in such a desperate moment. Mary never thought of the danger to herself, of the lonely shore and the wide ocean, and only the stars looked down upon that death-struggle.

She only saw that a woman was drowning, and she rushed in after her, rushed in madly, and just as a wave of the incoming tide carried a floating form nearer her—she seized the suicide by the dress and shouted for help and dragged with all her might, struggling fiercely to keep her own feet to the ground, and her own head above the waves.

It all seemed the work of a moment, and then she was on the shore—one desperate tug, and she and the suicide lay together side by side on the beach.

She heard the sound of voices—she saw two men leaning over her, she heard a shout, and she knew no more until she opened her eyes and found herself in a strange room.

“Where am I?” she said.

A kind voice answered her, “You are all right.”

She looked up and recognized the doctor she had been to fetch on the previous night to missus.

“Oh, dear,” she said, “however did I come here? Let me go home, they’ll be wondering what’s become of me.”

Then she remembered something of what had happened. “The young lady,” she said, “was she drowned?”

“No!” said the doctor, “you saved her, but you mustn’t talk any more yet awhile. You shall know all about it presently.”



“How’s missus!”

“As well as can be expected, and so’s the baby.”

“That’s all right,” said Mary, with a deep sigh, and then the “wicked girl” closed her eyes and dropped off to sleep again.

When Mary had quite recovered from the excitement and terror of her night’s adventure and was able to get up, the doctor told her all about it.

The young lady she had seen coming out of his house was a young lady patient who had been staying with him and his wife for the benefit of her health. She had had a love disappointment and had given way to melancholia.

No serious consequences were anticipated, but it was thought advisable that she should be under the constant supervision of a medical man, so she had been sent down with a trained nurse to the doctor’s house by her father, who was a distant relative of the doctor.

The young lady had grown gradually worse, but she had done nothing which would lead to a belief that she contemplated suicide.

The nurse had however been told to watch her carefully, and had done so.

The night that the doctor was called out the young lady was awakened by the ringing of the bell. The nurse, who had been suffering from neuralgia, had foolishly taken an opiate to make her sleep, and the young lady, finding herself unwatched, probably made up her mind to escape from those she considered to be her gaolers.

She must have opened the door and crept downstairs noiselessly in her nightdress, and walked out into the street.

Then she saw the sea, and the idea of suicide came into her poor wandering mind.

But for Mary’s lost latchkey having brought her back



to the spot, the young lady's body would probably have been found the next day on the beach, or perhaps picked up at sea.

When Mary got back to Prospect Mansion, missus, of course, was upstairs in bed, but cook received her and tossed her head, and said it was a nice thing for respectable servant gals to go a-roaming the street at night, and jumping into the sea, and she never heard of such things.

She wanted to call Mary a "wicked gal," but she didn't quite see how to do it.

Mr. Perkins seemed very much upset, and looked more scared and dazed than usual. The affair had made a great deal of commotion in Hastings, and people called at the house to make inquiries about it. It had got into the papers, too, and this Mr. Perkins, on his wife's behalf resented. Mrs. Perkins wasn't quite sure how her "visitors" would take it. She said it was just like having a murder committed in the house. It made everybody look up and point to her windows, and she was sure there was a crowd hanging about outside, and if there was, her drawing-rooms would give notice and her dining-rooms would leave.

But none of these things happened. As soon as the visitors in the house heard the story, they all developed a sudden desire to be waited upon by the brave young woman, and they kept her talking and telling them about it over and over again, till cook declared she would give notice, for if that "wicked gal," Mary, stopped chattering and scandal-mongertng all day long, how was the work to be done, with Missus ill and master a-wandering about the place and getting in the way as though he'd been brought ashore drowned himself.

Cook hadn't a logical way of putting her ideas together, but she made up for the lack of quality by the superabundance of quantity.

Mary went about her work as though nothing had hap-



pened, simply grateful that she hadn't been discharged for her carelessness in losing the latch-key, and her wickedness in rescuing young women from the ocean instead of hurrying home to wait on her missus.

But instead of being punished for her wickedness she was rewarded. A few days after she had resumed her domestic duties, and just as she was settling into her old wicked habits of leaving the bucket on the stairs, and the dust-pan on the drawing-room sofa, and answering the front door with a dirty apron on, and slopping the gravy from the joint on the stair carpet, the doctor arrived with an old gentleman, and requested to see Mary Jones.

Mary came up into the hall, cook listened at the top of the kitchen stairs, the missus had the bedroom door set wide open to catch what she could, and master hung so far over the bannisters on the drawing-room floor, that he was in imminent danger once or twice of falling bodily into the hall below.

And this is what they all heard. The old gentleman was the father of the young lady. To show his gratitude for Mary Jones' bravery in plunging into the sea to save the life of his unfortunate daughter, he had come to make her an advantageous offer.

He would pay into a bank for her a sum of money sufficient to enable her to start in any little business she chose, or if she was engaged to be married, he would start her and her husband in a nice little lodging-house, or any business they might wish to buy.

Was Mary engaged?

Mary blushed!

She wasn't exactly engaged, but she walked out when she had a Sunday off, which wasn't often in the season, with the baker's young man, and some day they had thought of getting married.

"The baker's young man—well, I never!" exclaimed cook on the top of the kitchen stairs.



"That accounts for her being so long taking the bread in," growled Mrs. Perkins, as she gripped the curtains of her bed, and sat upright to hear more.

"Very well, my girl," replied the old gentleman. "I leave the rest in my friend the doctor's hands. You understand that anything in reason I can do for you, I will."

. . . . .

A month afterwards "that wicked girl" married the baker's young man, and the young lady's father took and furnished for them a charming little house in Hastings, where they have made an excellent beginning.

And they have had a magnificent advertisement to start with, for on her wedding day the Mayor of Hastings publicly presented the blushing bride with the Royal Humane Society's medal, and she became quite a local celebrity, and everybody recommends her apartments.

She has developed into quite a smart little landlady, and the baker's young man has turned out a model husband and very handy in the house; and Mrs. Perkins never wheels her new baby past their house without noticing that there are no cards in the window, and she shrugs her shoulders and says to her mild and still slightly dazed Mr. Perkins, "Some people are lucky—*her* husband isn't a fool—her rooms are never empty, but then she owes it all to me, for she'd never have been where she is if she hadn't gone and lost the latchkey in the middle of the night; and fancy her carrying on all that time with the baker's young man, and nobody knowing of it. Ugh! the wicked gal!"



## WHY HE WAS HANGED.

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My first meeting with Paul Narovski was purely accidental.

I was anxious to make some inquiries into the condition of the foreign Jews, who were coming over to England and settling in the East End of London, as the white slaves of men who were said to be terrible taskmasters.

I had often thought that the subject must one day force itself to the front, and I had an idea that it was quite possible that a diligent explorer might discover in the East End of London a state of things the true meaning of which the British public had as yet failed to grasp.

I knew that from various parts of Russia, Poland, Austria and Germany poor Jews, many of them almost in a starving condition, were pouring over to this country, tempted by the wild tales which prevailed in their native towns and villages of the wealth that there was for the workers in the great City of the Golden Pavement.

To the toilers of some continental districts even the wage paid by the London Sweater sounded like a dream of wealth, compared with the miserable price their labor commanded at home. It was something to think of longingly.

The story of the foreign sweater, and the foreign hands who poured into the Metropolis to be sweated by him, is ancient history now. It has come to the front, it has had its boom, and it will pass presently into the great graveyard of the dead and gone nine days' wonder.

But at the time of which I speak, a few years ago, all was vague and uncertain. Rumors of an East End



Inferno, in which the living endured the tortures of the damned, floated now and again through Temple Bar and startled the West, but they were dismissed after a little discussion as gross exaggerations.

In those days, it was my custom to patronize a little West End barber, an Austrian, whose assistants were principally Poles—Barber's Poles, I might say, if the story I am about to tell was not too tragic to admit even of a jesting word.

The little fellow who generally attended to me was an excellent linguist. He spoke French and German fluently, and he was rapidly acquiring English. A very intelligent young fellow, too, and, like most barber's assistants, always ready to gossip.

One day, in the course of conversation, I mentioned my desire to know a little more concerning the Polish Jews of the East End. I asked him if he had heard anything in the district he came from of the glowing stories which tempted his countrymen to flock over here to swell our already-gorged labor market.

No—he knew very little. His business was a different one. As a clever barber, he had no difficulty in getting a situation either in Germany or France, or in England. He had been travelling from country to country, from town to town, ever since he was a little boy, and he had always been able to earn a fair wage. But he knew that the poor fellows who came here as tailors and bootmakers, and that sort of thing, had a bad time of it. They lived like dogs, “and yet,” he added, with a little sigh, “even then they live better than some of them could at home. Tiens !” There was a young man he knew who could tell me something, perhaps—a young man who had come from his (the young barber's) village, and was working at the tailoring in Whitechapel now. He met him sometimes when he went to a friend's house at the East End, where they played cards on Sunday. If I wished, he



would next Sunday make enquiries about his friend, and arrange that I should see him.

I went out of town on the following day, and it was a fortnight before I saw my little Polish barber again. Directly I entered the shop, and had taken my seat in front of the big looking-glass to be lathered, the young Pole came to me smiling all over his face.

"I have seen my friend from my native village," he said, "and I have his address now. He will tell you all you want to know any Sunday that you like. He will come to your house, if you wish it."

I thanked the little barber, and made an appointment for his countryman. On the following Sunday a short, thin, pale-faced young Pole was shown into my study.

The servant announced him as Mr. Narrowskin, or something of the sort, but he soon informed me that his name was Paul Narovski, and that he had come in consequence of a communication that had been made to him by his compatriot at the barber's shop.

Into the details of our conversation it is not necessary here to enter—what he said to me had nothing to do with the events which followed his visit, and which I am about to narrate.

He struck me as a remarkably intelligent young fellow though our conversation was conducted with some difficulty, as I did not understand "Yiddish," which is the everyday language of his class, and he could not speak either French or German, and his English vocabulary was too limited to allow him to go very fully into the details I was anxious to master.

I succeeded, however, in getting from him a few hints which would be valuable to me when I went more thoroughly into a study of the great Sweating question, and he furnished me with some names and addresses, which, he said, would be useful to me if I ever seriously took up the subject of pauper immigration to the East End.



When he left I gave him some cigars and a more substantial present, which I had some difficulty in inducing him to accept, and I entered his name and address in my note book "for future reference."

That future reference never came. Something else cropped up to occupy my attention, and all my spare time, and for six months I thought no more of Paul Narovski. The little Polish barber left his situation to take a better one in another neighborhood, and so there was nothing to call him to my mind or to cause me to mention his name.

But six months after our first and only interview, Paul Narovski's name was on everybody's tongue.

A murder had been committed under exceptionally extraordinary circumstances.

A young Polish Jewess, a married woman, had been found murdered in her bedroom between nine and ten in the morning. When the deed was discovered, the horrified people who had burst the door open and rushed in on hearing the alarm, found concealed beneath her bed a man in a fainting condition.

On being dragged out and examined it was found that he had been stabbed, but not mortally. A long knife, the weapon with which the deed had been accomplished, was lying on the floor under the bed.

The wounded man found beneath the murdered woman's bed was Paul Narovski.

The case, when the details were published in the early editions of the evening newspapers, created an enormous amount of interest. There were several novel elements in it. The young woman was very beautiful, and it was at first supposed that the motive of the crime was jealousy or passion. The statement of Paul Narovski, the statement he stammered out as soon as he came to his senses, was that he had gone to the room (he lodged and worked in the lower part of the house which was occu-



pied by a sweater), because he heard a cry for help. On entering the room he was horrified to see a man standing over the woman as she lay upon the bed. Before he could cry out the man seized him by the throat and attacked him. In the struggle he fell. As he fell he received a stab in the breast from the knife which the murderer still held in his hand, and he must have crawled under the bed and fainted from loss of blood. He knew no more until he was dragged out and found himself in the presence of a crowd of his fellow-lodgers and neighbors.

Pressed for further particulars he said he could give none; he did not recognize the man, and he supposed the reason the man didn't finish him off was that he heard some one coming and made his escape.

It was rather a lame story—so lame that Paul Narovski was arrested on the charge of murdering Esther Jakabowski, tailoress, wife of Isaac Jakabowski, tailor. The theory of the police was that he had cherished a secret amour for the woman—that he had murdered her in a moment of rage because she refused to countenance his suit, and that immediately afterwards he had either attempted to commit suicide or had stabbed himself in order to give color to the extraordinary statement by means of which he hoped to account for his presence in the murdered woman's room.

I was startled when I read the story. To know a murderer—to have shaken hands with an assassin—is not an every-day experience. I tried to recall the young man's appearance and manner, and to make up my mind whether he looked like a man who could commit such a crime or not.

I couldn't bring myself to accept Narovski's defence—from what little I had seen of him I couldn't think he was a pitiful coward. The crawling under the bed was what I failed to understand. If he had been found lying



on the floor with the marks of a desperate fight for life about the room his defence would have been more plausible.

The general opinion, as the facts of the case and the antecedent events which led up to the tragedy were slowly unravelled, was that Narovski was guilty. He had murdered the woman and stabbed himself to save his neck. The wound turned out to be a very slight one, the half-hearted sort of a stab which a man might give himself who was anxious not to injure himself mortally. No trace of the mysterious "man" could be discovered, no one was known to the woman's husband or friends who would be likely to want to kill her. The motive was not robbery, for the poor Jewess had nothing but her beauty to tempt an assailant. Moreover, she was an exceedingly well-conducted, quiet little woman, and the bare idea of a paramour was scouted by the neighbors who knew her, and among whom she had lived for over two years.

Narovski, however, persisted in his statement, and at last one or two members of the get-a-murderer-off-at-any-price-society began to take his case up and to put forward theories, more or less ingenious, in the newspapers to account for the circumstantial evidence against him.

When the trial came on, however, the theory of the prosecution had by far the best of it, and the theory of the defence was felt to be woefully weak by the side of it.

It was proved that the knife had been seen in Narovski's possession previously. It was proved that on one or two occasions when Esther Jakabowski went out of her street at night Narovski had been seen to follow her. A witness from the West End came forward who proved that on one occasion he saw Esther Jakabowski at the West End of London. He was a Polish Jew in the same trade and knew her. He exchanged a few remarks with her, and a few moments afterwards he met Narovski, who simply passed him with a nod. The circumstances



never struck him as peculiar until he read of the murder, and the theory that it was jealousy, or mad passion, which had prompted the deed. The witness was certain that Esther did not know that Narovski was following her, and Narovski was evidently annoyed at being recognized. This evidence, of course, was only valuable as far as it went. But it fitted in admirably with the theory of the prosecution. The evidence that the knife had been seen in Narovski's possession was established beyond a doubt; he had been found in the murdered woman's room *with the door locked on the inside*, and all inquiries failed to elicit the slightest evidence as to anyone having seen the mysterious man to whom the prisoner attributed the crime.

The evidence as to the door having been locked on the inside came before the public for the first time at the trial. The newspapers had not noted it. In the confusion the people who rushed in were, some of them, not sure if the door was locked or not. But an expert examination had proved that it was, and the broken fastenings were exhibited to the jury.

After a long and patient trial the judge summed up, and the jury after a short deliberation returned a verdict of guilty.

The judge, in passing sentence of death, informed the convicted man that he was not to buoy himself up with any false hopes, but to prepare himself for the punishment which in this country is the expiation for the deed of which he had been found guilty.

After the trial the excitement abated, and most people considered that, whatever mystery might still surround the motive, the crime had been clearly traced to its author.

One or two people, however, still held out, notably the editor of an evening journal, who tried the whole case over again in his columns, and was perpetually producing a little piece of evidence more or less in favor of the



theory, that Narovski was after all the victim of strong circumstantial evidence. Special artists were engaged to draw the room, people were interviewed who had known Narovski, and gave him an excellent character, and the paper in question produced day after day that mass of hearsay and unknown testimony which never fails to crop up around a trial for murder.

Three days before the one appointed for Narovski's execution, this journal came out with a startling headline on its bills: "Shall an innocent man be hanged?" and in its pages it argued with frenzied earnestness in favor of a reprieve. Most important testimony was to be forthcoming from someone—a fresh piece of evidence had been obtained—a little girl had been found who had seen a man on the stairs on the morning of the murder, etc., etc.

And on the very afternoon that the editor of this journal, to strengthen his frenzied efforts, declared that he would risk his life upon Narovski's innocence—a late edition of his own paper had to insert the startling intelligence that Narovski had confessed his guilt to the prison authorities, and that his confession had been forwarded to the Home Secretary.

It was a terrible—a humiliating collapse—but there was nothing more to be done, nothing more to be said, and three days afterwards, on the appointed day, and at the appointed hour, Paul Narovski, who some nine months previously had sat with me in my study and discussed the condition of his fellow-countrymen, was hanged by the neck for the murder of Esther Jakabowski.

*And Paul Narovski was innocent of the crime.*

And yet he confessed to it himself at the last moment.

True, but he never murdered Esther Jakabowski, his hand never struck the blow that killed her.

Was the story that he told when he was arrested true then? No, he never told the truth. He told a lie when



first the crime was discovered—and he died with a lie upon his lips. He knew the murderer, knew him by name, and he could have told the police where to lay their hands upon him at any time, but he held his peace.

If I knew this why did I not come forward to save him, the reader may naturally ask.

I did not know it then. I came at last, after reading the evidence, to be fully convinced of Narovski's guilt. I never knew he was innocent until months after the man was in his felon's grave, and then I was not sure enough to speak. Even now that I am going to tell you the strange story of a London crime, word for word as it has come to me since, I cannot prove that it was true. I can only tell you what I have learned, and leave you to compare it with the facts adduced at the trial, and then to form your own conclusion.

But I believe you will come to the same conclusion that I did—that Paul Narovski was hanged for a murder which another man committed.

I cannot even tell you where I obtained my information. It came to me from a man who may have lied. He was a Pole, he had been among these people, was living among them at the time of the crime. Hear his story and judge it for yourselves.

There exists in the East End of London, among these Polish immigrants, a political society, a vast number of men, some of them rich, most of them poor, who have banded themselves together to accomplish a great scheme of vengeance against those whom they consider the oppressors of their land, the cause of their misery, and the authors of that state of things which compels thousands of them to leave their native land to seek for the bare necessities of life. In a land like ours the motives, the fierce energy, the lifelong steadfastness of purpose of these men are difficult to understand. In Russia and Poland these things are understood only too well.



Paul Narovski was a member of one of these societies. He had taken its vows, he had devoted his life to its objects. He worked that he might live, he lived as thousands of these poor exiles do, sustained by the one idea, that some day they would strike a blow at tyranny and take their revenge for years of bitter wrong.

Esther Jakabowski was a member of another society, as mysterious in its ways, as vast in its ramifications. She was a member of that society which has its agents amongst the poorest daughters and amongst the richest butterflies of fashion, amongst the foreigners in every capital abroad, among the natives of every capital at home. She was in the pay of the Russian police, or rather she was suspected of being so.

One day this woman, who had been followed and watched by members of the society in London, was denounced at a meeting and condemned to death. The order for her execution was given to Paul Narovski, the man who lodged in the same house, knew her habits, and would be able to choose the most convenient opportunity.

When vengeance of this kind is to be executed, it is usual to tell off two conspirators—one to do the deed, the other to see that he does it. If the first man should fail, it is the duty of the second to take up the task.

When Paul Narovski entered the room where the sleeping woman lay he had chosen his moment well. The husband was absent ; the woman had gone to lie down—there was no one about.

He entered the room and, creeping up to the bedside, drew his knife. Then he hesitated. Something in the sleeping woman's face appealed to his pity—perhaps (who knows?) the story that he had nourished a deep feeling of love for the woman was true. At any rate, he hesitated, and crying, "No, I cannot do it," dropped the knife.

It was picked up instantly by a man who stood behind



him. "Traitor," the shadower of the assassin hissed in his ears, as he plunged the weapon into the sleeping woman's heart.

Involuntarily Paul Narovski uttered a cry of horror. The man turned upon him and seized him by the throat. At that moment a footstep was heard. It was a false alarm, but the man, uttering a few words of dread import to Narovski, crept noiselessly from the room.

Narovski's first impulse was to lock the door. His brain reeled—he was half mad with terror and horror. He locked the door to lock the assassin out in case he should return to finish his bloody work. Esther might still be alive—there might be hope. Trembling in every limb, he bent over the body, placed his ear to the heart, and so covered himself with blood.

Esther Jakabowski was dead.

Another man had done the awful deed entrusted to him.

He knew his fate now.

If he denounced the assassin there would be a thousand hands raised against him, each one ready to strike.

Utterly beside himself with grief and despair, the unhappy Pole plunged the knife into his own breast, thinking death the only alternative, and it is probable that in his agony of mind and body he rolled beneath the bed.

You know the rest. He persisted in his innocence, but gave the authorities no clue to the real assassin. He dared not.

By some means he was made to learn, even in his prison cell, that it would be better for him to confess now and shield the secret society. He could only escape by denouncing the real assassin, and the penalty for the traitor was death—death which was bound to come in whatever quarter of the world he sought refuge.

If he died now, he expiated his failure to carry out the decree of the Brotherhood. If he let the law take its course,



and stopped all further inquiry by a confession, he knew that his people—his poor old father and mother far away in their native land—would be helped and cared for by the society.

If he did not, if he imperilled the sacred secret entrusted to him, by keeping the inquiry open, then vengeance would fall even upon those he left behind him.

And so Paul Narovski confessed to the deed, and was duly hanged and forgotten ; and at the next meeting of the society he was pardoned, the ban was removed from his name, and his poor old father and mother were “ compensated ” for the loss of their son.

A strange wild story this. It passes belief almost that such things can be here in free, prosaic England. But the man who told it me has passed his whole life among these people. It is his *business* to know their secrets, and to keep St. Petersburg informed of all that happens in London.

I have told the tale as it was told to me, leaving the reader to form his own opinion upon it. It is quite possible that the poor woman who was murdered was no police agent at all. She might have been denounced, as often happens, by an enemy. She might have given rise to the suspicion by an act which would admit of a different interpretation. But she was condemned to death by the London Branch of the Secret Society, and Paul Narovski was ordered to be her executioner.

His story opens up a new land of romance in the very centre of our sordid gloomy city, and whether it be itself romance or truth, it interested me deeply ; and in the belief that it will interest others, I give it a place among these Dramas of Life, for drama it is, as strange and as powerful as any that have been played upon the world's vast stage.



## LETTY KLEIN.

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THEY were standing together, a young man and a young woman, at the wings of the Melody Theatre, while a rehearsal was in progress. She was a tall, fair girl, not what the world would call beautiful, but with a pleasant, happy, smiling face that was very charming. The features were irregular—the nose too small, the mouth too large—but it was such a frank, good-natured face that it attracted you at once. Letty Klein was what the young men of the day would call “a jolly girl.” A member of a theatrical family, she was brought up to the stage, and though she had never become a great actress or a great singer, she acted gracefully and sang prettily, and was always sure of a fairly good part in a comic opera. Her German origin was unmistakable. She had the German hair, the German eyes, and the squareness of the German build. But Letty Klein was born in England, and in all but her name and parentage was English to the core. Her father, a good musician, had come over to this country young, and had worked his way up to the position of first violinist in the orchestra of one of the leading London theatres. He had married a little English actress, and lived a happy domestic life until Letty was ten years old, and then the great sorrow of his life fell upon him—his good little wife fell ill on tour.

She had not been very well for some time past. They thought it was nothing serious, but one night after playing she complained of feeling terribly cold. She went home,



was taken worse, and never left her bed. She died of typhoid fever, a fever undoubtedly contracted in one of the vilely insanitary, ill-ventilated dressing-rooms, which some years ago were a disgrace to the smaller provincial theatres.

Herr Klein, to accompany his wife, had obtained the post of conductor to the travelling company, a comic opera combination, and nursed her devotedly in her last illness. Letty, who was at school in London, was sent for, and came in time to receive her mother's last words.

"Take care of daddy when I'm gone," whispered the dying actress, as with a look of infinite love she gazed at the weeping, heart-broken man, and the sobbing child kneeling by her bedside, then, with a gentle pressure of her husband's hand, and a whispered "God bless you, my darling," the brave little actress closed her eyes forever on the world's great stage.

Letty remembered her mother's dying words. She had always loved her father—now she clung to him with an affection intensified by their common loss. Her father was her first thought in the morning—her last thought at night. She was a little household fairy, anticipating his every wish, managing the little home as cleverly as a grown-up woman could have done.

Sunday was her happiest day. Then there was no work to take her father from her, and they spent the whole day together—walking out into the parks, going little trips up the river, and, when the weather was cold and wet, reading together their favorite books.

Over the fireplace in their little sitting room there hung a portrait of Letty's mother, and it often seemed to the girl as she looked up at it that "mother" was with them, watching over them, looking at them, and sometimes—it was but a childish fancy—she thought that the face seemed to smile upon them.

When she was seventeen, Letty, who had inherited a



love for the stage, persuaded her father to let her adopt it as a profession. She could be at his theatre, and it would be so nice for them to be together—to go to the theatre together—to return together.

At first Herr Klein objected, but at last he allowed himself to be convinced that after all Letty ought to be making a position for herself. She would not always have him with her. He was not a strong man, and of late years he had begun to feel the wear and tear of a theatrical life, and exposure to all sorts of winds and weathers out of doors, of draughts and inconveniences in the theatre. Having consented, he decided to do the best he could for his daughter, and so he interviewed his manager and succeeded in getting Letty in the chorus as a starting point.

The girl was quick and industrious, and having the advantage of her father's musical tuition she soon got out of the chorus and was cast for small parts. She was a great favorite with the company because she was always kind and obliging, and she was well received by the audience, who were taken by her natural ease and grace and her unaffected good humor.

After three or four years of good hard work and experience, Letty one day, in the absence through illness of an important actress, was entrusted with the part—and played it capitally. She was a genuine success, and from that moment she advanced rapidly until she became quite a popular favorite, and parts were specially written for her by the authors of the theatre in which she had stayed from the first engagement, partly because the management did not wish to lose her, but chiefly because it was the theatre where her father still occupied the position of first violin.

I have devoted so much time to the young woman, that I fear I have been guilty of unpardonable rudeness to the young man, who was standing beside her at the



wings when I first called your attention to the pair.

He was a military-looking young man, erect, with fine, broad shoulders, and a face which had only two weak points about it, the chin and the mouth. It was a strong, handsome face, with a weak mouth and a weak chin, which imparted a certain amount of effeminacy to his general expression. The eyes were large and dreamy, the eyes that women rave about, and over his high, well-shaped forehead, a mass of dark hair, curled in little crisp curls, and he had not yet sacrificed to his art the soft, silky moustache, which all the ladies of the chorus vowed it would be an act of barbarity to compel him to remove, even if he were going to play a part in the period of "clean faces."

Fortunately for Herbert Jephson, the new baritone of the Melody Theatre, the period in which the new opera they were rehearsing was laid, permitted him, as a Captain of the Royal Guards, to retain his moustache, and the ladies of the chorus were much relieved in consequence.

Mr. Herbert Jephson was one of the new "gentlemen recruits" to the professional ranks. He had commenced life as the son of an independent gentleman. At his father's death, the independency had been found to have been purchased by a good deal of mortgaging of property, and when all the independent father's creditors were satisfied the son found that unless he did something for a living he would have to be contented with a modest income of some £300 a year.

There was very little he could do, for he had had no special training for anything, and at the age of six-and-twenty it is rather difficult to begin to study for a profession—by the time you have finished studying you are getting a little *passe* to start as a beginner and compete with younger men.

The one gift which young Jephson had was that of music. This gift he had developed under good masters, and he



was always in great request for amateur concerts. As soon as he had time to consider his position, he saw that if he was to rely upon anything it must be his voice. He at once set about the task of obtaining admission to the ranks of the profession. He took lessons of a stage tutor, played for amateur clubs by way of practice, then paid a large sum to an agent and procured an engagement with a third rate travelling company in which he acquired plenty of experience, but never received his salary after the second week of the tour. The manager was a charming young fellow, who had married a chorus girl and quarrelled with his father; he had therefore quitted his father's office in a rage, and devoted his limited capital to touring a company with his wife, the pretty little chorus girl as the prima donna.

In spite of the fact of the youthful manager walking about the refreshment room every evening in faultless evening dress, and inviting all the local critics to whom he was introduced to join him in a glass of champagne, the speculation didn't boom, and the third week saw the "capital" nearly gone.

The company, anxious to fill in their time till the Christmas provincial pantomimes furnished most of them with engagements, consented to take half salaries, and Herbert Jephson being a jolly fellow and a gentleman, got none at all. In fact after the sixth week of the tour the manager who had "palled in with him," instead of hinting at payment later on, invited him to invest a couple of hundred in the tour and "take a share."

Herbert didn't see the share, and so he didn't accept the offer, but he stayed on until the company broke up for lack of their railway fares to the next town, and then with the experience of the boards he had gained, he returned to town and began to look out for a London engagement, and eventually found himself at the Melody.

Thanks to his voice, rather than his acting, which was



slightly amateurish, he scored a success, and at the termination of the run—rather a short one—of the opera in which he had appeared, he signed a further engagement at an increased salary with the management. His good looks, his moustache, and his gentlemanly manner made him a great favorite with the female members of the company—the male members didn't care for him so much—the girls said that was because they were jealous.

One man in the company hated him, and made no secret of it. Between them, from the first, there had been open warfare, and, alas! the innocent cause of the ill-feeling was Letty Klein.

Mr. Guy Lawrence, the tenor, was so accustomed to carry all before him in the way of hero-worship and admiration, that he could hardly believe the evidence of his senses when he found that Letty, upon whom he had deigned to smile condescendingly, didn't appreciate his attentions. And when he confessed to himself that he had been fool enough to fall seriously in love with her, and found that his languishing looks, and his somewhat too cordial stage embraces had not the slightest effect, he imagined that the girl must be pretending indifference out of sheer coquetry.

Was it possible that he, the admired tenor, who had dozens of scented *billet doux* every week at the stage door, was being seriously spurned by an actress, whom he honored with his most discreet attentions, and to whom he really would not mind sacrificing himself at the altar if she made that a condition.

Nettled and wounded in his self-esteem, the hitherto all-conquering tenor became sulky and morose. He treated Letty to a little sarcasm. When the opera compelled him to make love to her, to put his arm round her waist, or to kiss her hand, he apologized to her and hoped that his love-making was not too pronounced and all that sort of thing. Letty laughed good-naturedly at him and told him not to be silly.



Silly ! He had honored her by falling in love with her, and she told him not to be silly.

It was unendurable.

But as he really was as much in love with her as a fashionable tenor can possibly be in love with anyone but himself, he began to fret under her sustained indifference, and one day he wrote a letter, a letter telling her with many flowery expressions that he had fallen in love with her, and asking her to tell him plainly whether she could ever think of him as her husband.

Letty took the letter to her father.

"Papa, dear," she said, "I've had an offer of marriage."

Old Conrad Klein looked troubled.

"You dear old goose," cried Letty, stooping down and kissing him. "I'm not going to accept it. Read this."

And she handed her father the letter.

"Guy Lawrence," he said, "Guy Lawrence in love with you?"

"Nonsense, papa, he only thinks he is. Why he's always in love with somebody or other. I want to say 'No' as nicely as I can—how shall I say it?"

Conrad Klein thought a little while.

"I don't think Guy Lawrence's wife will be a happy woman, but he evidently thinks he loves you, and I shouldn't like you to hurt his feelings, so answer him as nicely as you can."

"Of course, I will, papa, but he'll only be wild for a little time. He'll be madly in love with a lady in the stage-box, or a beautiful girl in the stalls in a fortnight. He won't die of a broken heart over me."

Then Letty sat down and wrote a nice little letter, assuring Mr. Guy Lawrence that she duly appreciated the honor, but she had no desire to marry, and she hoped they would always be good friends, etc., etc.

When Lawrence received the letter he was deeply mor-



tified. There wasn't even a sentimental line in it, nothing to show that Letty had been tormented by doubt before she refused such a brilliant offer.

But he accepted his rejection, and took pains to conceal his true feelings, and from that day they acted and sang together without the slightest reference to the past.

But when Herbert Jephson joined the company all was changed—not only did he get as many encores as Lawrence, but the girls all spoke of him in terms of rapturous admiration.

And, worse than all, Lawrence soon discovered with the keen eye of a rejected lover, that Letty Klein was not wholly indifferent to the new baritone.

Yes, Herbert Jephson and Letty Klein fell in love with each other.

How? ah, gentle reader, who can tell how it is that men and women fall in love with each other! We know that they do every day, but if you locked a number of young couples up in a cage, and kept them under close observation, as Sir John Lubbock does his ants, you wouldn't be able to tell the way in which they fall in love, or why some of them do, and some of them don't, or why some couples fall in love at once, and others take months—even years—before they find out that they can't live apart from each other.

I don't know how, when, or why, Letty Klein and Herbert Jephson fell in love,—all that I know is that they did, and that Guy Lawrence knew it almost before they knew it themselves.

From that moment he hated Herbert Jephson. The best regulated man will sometimes hate the fellow who wins the girl he wanted to marry. How then can you wonder at a fashionable tenor giving away to a passion which, as powerfully as love itself, sways the whole human race.

When next Letty Klein came to her father about a lover,



she came with blushing, burning cheeks, and a beating heart. She didn't laugh this time. She just knelt down one Sunday afternoon by her father's chair, with a timid, tender little glance at the picture of her dead mother over the mantle-shelf, and, then hiding her head against his breast she whispered, "Papa, I've got something to tell you."

"Yes, dear," said her father kindly—he was just going off into his afternoon doze—"What is it?"

"Please, papa, Mr. Jephson's in love with me."

"What!"

The old violinist opened his eyes quite wide, and sat up in his chair—no dozing for him that afternoon.

"Yes, papa dear, he is, he told me so, and, and papa, you won't be angry with me, will you, for I can't help it, but I'm afraid I'm in love with him."

The old violinist knew the truth; love had come at last to his child—the love that was to come between them, and take her from him; the love that henceforward was to make him second in her thoughts, and a stranger—a stranger to him—first.

For a moment he let his own selfish sorrow show itself upon his face, then with an effort he smiled, and lifting his daughter's blushing face from his breast, bent his own down and kissed her fondly.

"Letty, my darling," he said, "your happiness will always be mine. Pray God, you have chosen well."

"Oh, papa, Herbert is so kind—so good—I—I——"

Then something came up in her throat and she could say no more. She only gave a little sob, and the old man put his arms about her, and took her to his breast as he used to do when she was a child, and kissed her and comforted her, the tears slowly rolling down his own worn cheeks, when he tried to smile and talk gayly of her happy future with the man she loved.

And when Letty, smiling through her own tears, looked



up at last she saw her mother's face smiling on them too, and it seemed to her that in the gentle eyes there was a look of sympathy and love, and that the dumb lips were shaping a blessing on them both.

There were no more Sundays for father and daughter after that. Herbert Jephson joined the party now. He had quite won over Conrad Klein. He had told Letty's father all his history—he had laid his heart bare, and the old man took to him. He was glad Letty was going to be married now. He would not have to leave her alone and unprotected in the world. He saw that Herbert Jephson was a gentleman, he admired his character, and he was certain that there was an excellent future before him in the profession he had adopted.

And so Herbert and Letty were engaged, and everybody in the theatre knew it, and though some of the chorus girls thought it was a pity for him to be married so soon, yet they were all very fond of Letty, and they were the first to say that they were glad she was going to marry such a charming fellow; if he must be married they would sooner Letty carry him off than anybody else in the theatre.

Guy Lawrence heard the news first on the stage—one of the girls, a pert, mischievous little minx was his informant. She was standing behind him at the wings, and he turned and addressed a chaffing remark to her about an old fellow in the stalls, who was popularly supposed to come night after night because he was madly in love with her.

“There's your mash, old Methuselah, in the stalls again to-night, Jenny,” he said; “if you don't marry him soon you'll lose him. They say he's go next birthday.”

Jenny laughed, showing her little white teeth viciously.

“I'm not like you,” she said, “I don't fancy everybody who looks at me in love with me. It's an awful take



down for you, Letty Klein marrying Mr. Jephson, I should think."

"What's that?" exclaimed Lawrence, who had begun to laugh at what he called Jenny's "cheek."

"You know you thought you'd only to look at her once and she'd fall into your arms, but she didn't. She's going to marry Jephson, they're engaged—her dresser told me so."

It was Lawrence's cue. Biting his lip with rage and mortification at the idea that his discomfiture and his rival's success was the gossip of the theatre, he put on his languishing primo tenore look, and went on to the stage.

"I gave him one for himself that time," said Jenny, as she turned to the other girls; "he will be mad, I'll bet, now he knows we know all about it."

The hatred Lawrence felt for his rival was increased tenfold by the knowledge that everybody in the theatre looked upon him (Lawrence) as a disappointed suitor for Letty Klein's hand. He didn't waste any time in wondering how the secret had leaked out. In a theatre everything is known. It is a hotbed of gossip and scandal. What the ladies and gentlemen don't know about each other they invent, and there is always in a company a mischief maker, whose delight it is to set everybody by the ears.

"So," Guy Lawrence muttered to himself, as he left the theatre and walked towards his club in the Strand. "So they're engaged, are they? Jephson's going to marry her, and I'm to be the laughing-stock of the company. I'm to pose as the neglected suitor. It's to go all over the profession that I was in love with Letty Klein, and that she refused me for this damned amateur. Well, there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, and they're not married yet."

Under ordinary circumstances Guy Lawrence would



have scorned to do what he presently began to look upon as a fair reprisal for the injury he considered he had received at the hands of Herbert Jephson.

But his vanity had been deeply wounded, and wounded vanity has been the cause of some of the meanest and most cowardly actions the world has seen. History teems with tragedies which have been the result of a blow to a great man's pride. Half the vendettas of modern society, the vendettas which finish in the law courts and the police courts in these unromantic days are due to wounded vanity.

The first thing that Lawrence did was to try and find out something to Jephson's discredit. He made inquiries right and left about him—he found out the actors with whom he had acted—he got hold of a man who had been connected with the travelling company that had come to grief while Jephson was a member of it.

He wanted to find a woman or a man who had a grudge against Jephson, and at last he found—a woman.

In the meantime, heedless of the impending danger, Herbert Jephson and Letty Klein dreamed their love's young dream, and although they never made idiots of themselves in public, it was easy to see that they were devoted to each other.

Guy Lawrence offered Herbert Jephson his congratulations, and from the day that his plan of revenge was completed took the utmost pains to conceal his real feeling, and now laid himself out to be as agreeable as possible.

"Lawrence isn't such a bad fellow, after all, Letty," said Herbert, one day. "Now he sees that there's no chance for him he is behaving very well, and I think he really wants to be friendly."

Letty was pleased to hear it.

She wasn't a vain little puss who wanted to set men by the ears and to make women jealous; she wanted to make everybody about her as happy as possible,



She had been just a wee bit nervous at first after she had accepted Herbert Jephson, as to the way in which Lawrence would take it. She was afraid that there might be a little feeling, and the rivalry of the men might be intensified. There is no place in the world in which a little bad feeling can make everybody so uncomfortable as in a theatre. The quarrel of two people will often upset the entire company, and sometimes wreck the fortunes of an enterprise.

Everything in a theatre is theatrical, including the emotions of the people who pass their lives in simulating the feelings of ordinary humanity. Everything is intensified and built up for effect. Love is more passionate, hatred more bitter, revenge more furious, jealousy more terrible, than among ordinary mortals. Your real actor never leaves off acting or using the tricks of the profession. He can weep when another man can only heave a sympathetic sigh ; he can shower upon the acquaintance of a few days a vocabulary of endearing terms which you or I, gentle reader, would not think of employing to a life-long friend. He magnifies everything to theatrical proportions. If an audience applaud him when he makes his entrance, it is "By Jove, my dear fellow, they rose at me—they wanted to eat me. Gad, you never heard anything like it in your life." If any one tells an actor that his little bit of pathos was very affecting, it is, "He told me, my dear fellow, that he cried like a child at it. It made me ill."

Exaggeration comes naturally to people who are trained to exaggerate in order to get their effects, and they are not to be blamed when use becomes their second nature.

It was because Guy Lawrence had lived his whole life in the highly charged atmosphere of theatrical life, that he flung himself with such intensity into the scheme for his rival's discomfiture. He did not see the baseness of his act. He only saw a way of humiliating a man and a



woman who had humiliated him, and whom for the time being he hated with all the intensity of theatrical hatred.

And so he brought upon the scene a woman—a woman who had known Herbert Jephson in bygone days—and he bribed and cajoled her into speaking the word which should wreck the happiness of two young lives.

The young gentleman who had left his father's office in order to run a young lady in the chorus, whom he had married, as the prima donna of a travelling Comic Opera Company, was in London, and temporarily very hard up.

His papa, Josiah Dabbs, Esq., in addition to being a big pot in the City, was also a big pot in religious circles, and had been brought up to regard all places of worldly amusement, more especially theatres and music halls, as the anterooms of perdition. When his son Samuel, who was supposed to be reading hard for the bar, absented himself so frequently from the paternal mansion at Streatham, remaining in town in order, as he said, to prosecute his studies, etc., with less interruption, the worthy Josiah little dreamed that his boy had surrendered himself to the fascination of the footlights, and had succeeded in getting an introduction to a fair young chorister, to whom he had at once, over a *recherche* little supper at the Cavour, offered his hand and heart.

Miss Tilly Tennyson (real name Matilda Toomey) was by no means a bad-hearted little girl, and enjoyed the reputation of knowing how to take care of herself. When first Mr. Dabbs, Junior, proposed to her, she put it down to his youth and inexperience, and the champagne, and she laughed at him, and tapped him with her fan, and said it was time she got home, as "Mother would be sitting up."

But when on the following night she received a letter at the stage door, in which the youthful Samuel declared that



her beauty and her genius had made an impression upon him which would only end with his life, and renewing his offer, Tilly, who had ascertained that old Dabbs was worth a lot of money, and that Samuel was his only son, began to take a more serious view of the matter.

That night Samuel was waiting for his answer at the stage door, and they adjourned to the Cavour for supper.

After supper Tilly allowed Samuel to accompany her in a hansom as far as her house in a little side street running off the Camden-road, and she walked about with him for quite half an hour "keeping mother up" in the most undutiful manner, but during the walk from the top of the street, and then back again to the bottom, and so on, Samuel persuaded Tilly to be engaged to him, and painted a glorious picture of what she could do with "his money." He would take her away from the chorus at once, he would have an opera written for her, and if he couldn't get a London theatre, she should star the provinces.

Tilly was delighted with the idea of being a prima donna, and having her own company, and seeing her name in big type on the bills, and her photographs in the shop windows, and her pictures, extra size, stuck up outside the theatre doors. And after she had said "yes," and then let Samuel kiss her, and waited till he got out of sight before she put the latch-key in the door, which might have destroyed the illusion she was anxious to maintain in his youthful breast that "Mother always sat up," she went upstairs to bed, and dreamt all night of huge posters, with "Miss Tilly Tennyson, the Queen of Comic Opera," upon them in letters two feet high.

The marriage eventually took place. Josiah Dabbs refused to have anything more to do with his son, or to receive his son's wife, and the youthful Samuel with the limited capital at his command, and a certain amount raised on his expectations, set out to startle the provinces with his leading lady and a comic opera which had been



a dead failure in London, and which had been foisted on to him for a sum down, as just the thing with which to set the rivers of England on fire.

It was with his company that Herbert Jephson travelled as long as it lasted. He and young Mr. Dabbs fraternized considerably (they were, perhaps, a little out of their element with some of the other members), and it was then, in an incautious moment, that Jephson confided to Samuel a little story, in which he was the hero, and a young lady named Maggie Helsham was the heroine.

Jephson was a very good-looking fellow, and a Bohemian, to a certain extent, in his habits. I am not going, because he is my hero, to make him out any better than he was. There are periods in the lives of many young men, who become excellent husbands, devoted fathers, and honorable citizens, into which it is not wise to inquire too closely. Herbert Jephson, at the very outset of his career, had formed a temporary partnership with a young woman. Somehow or other—the arrangement is unfortunately, common enough with friendless young men in great cities—the acquaintance drifted into a *liaison*, and their *liaison* had ended in their occupying the same lodgings, and passing with the landladies and others whom it might concern as Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Jephson.

Just before Herbert went on tour, the temporary union had abruptly terminated. There had been a few words, and when Herbert announced his intention of going into the provinces, Maggie had declined to go with him. For many reasons Jephson was not sorry. He wouldn't have done anything mean or ungentlemanly, but he was beginning to feel the falseness of their position, and Maggie had not been quite the sort of a young person he would care to enter into a permanent contract with and look up to as the guide, philosopher, and friend of his mature years.



So in just such a matter-of-fact way as they had drifted together they drifted apart. It was the girl's doing, not his, and there was an end of it.

But one day while he was on tour he received a letter from Maggie, asking him to let her have £20, as she was "hard up," etc., etc. He hadn't the money. His salary was in arrears, and it was on this occasion that he went to his youthful manager, and in explaining why he bothered him he rather indiscreetly revealed the whole of the circumstances which led up to this demand.

Young Mr. Dabbs was at that time financing his company with extreme difficulty, and it was generally a wild struggle to get his company on to the next town because railway fares must be paid in advance. There is no temporizing with the booking clerk. The booking clerk who will take a bill at three months for the railway fares of twenty-five people from Newcastle to Edinburgh has not burst upon a startled world. Companies have been known to "travel on their luggage," and watches and pins and ladies' bracelets and brooches have been left with a kind-hearted station-master, but beyond that the romance of touring the provinces with a "show" has not yet gone.

But though it was Saturday night, and the house all told was only £27 10s. 6d., making a total on the week of £99 2s. 3d., and Mr. Dabb's share of that was only forty-five per cent. after the first £15 had been taken by the local manager, he determined under the circumstances to see what he could do for his friend; and he there and then proceeded to deposit his diamond shirt studs with a tradesman in the town, and this made up sufficient to hand Herbert Jephson £15. This Jephson duly forwarded to Maggie, together with a five-pound note which he still possessed himself.

This circumstance had impressed the whole affair vividly on young Mr. Dabb's mind, and so it happened that when, a long time afterward, he had retired from man-



agement, and was in London working hard to get back into his papa's graces, while Tilly, like a good little woman, had gone back to her small parts, and was contributing her £2 10s. od. a week to the domestic expenses of their drawing-room floor in South Crescent, Bedford Square, he recalled the event when he met Guy Lawrence one evening at the Foyer Club in the Strand, and Lawrence artfully led the conversation on to the subject of Mr. Dabbs' former baritone.

"I suppose he was an awful masher, wasn't he?" said Mr. Lawrence.

"He was a jolly good fellow, and a credit to my company," replied Mr. Dabbs, with that accent on the "my" which even his short managerial experience had enabled him to acquire.

"Run after by the girls a good deal, wasn't he?"

"They all liked him very much, he was such a thorough gentleman."

"Oh, I heard that one of the girls was awfully gone on him," said Mr. Lawrence, still trying to see if there was anything to be gleaned in this quarter.

"If she was, he wasn't gone on her, as far as I know. I fancy it was a case of once bitten twice shy with Jephson."

"Oh, yes, I think I remember," exclaimed the artful interviewer, "he didn't come very well out of that affair, did he?"

The youthful and still verdant Samuel fell into the trap. He defended Jephson, and in defending him he told the story of how Herbert had sent the £20 to the young lady who had left him in London.

"I remember it well enough," said Samuel, laughing, "because, by Jove, I was awfully hard up, and had to pawn my diamond studs to make up the money."

Guy declared that put a different complexion on the affair. It was quite another story he had heard (he had



never heard a word about the affair in his life), and then he succeeded gradually in getting Mr. Dabbs to remember the lady's name, and when he left the club that night he knew that at one time the man who had cut him out, the man who was going to marry Letty Klein, had had a mistress, and that her name was Maggie Helsham.

To find her was not an easy task. His inquiries had to be conducted without exciting suspicion. He did not want it known that he was the person who was trying to discover the whereabouts of Jephson's former mistress.

But chance favored him, and one day he found himself in possession of the information that a young woman named Maggie Helsham was living in Stamford Street, Blackfriars.

A few inquiries satisfied Guy Lawrence that Maggie might without any great difficulty be persuaded to further his scheme. She was hard up—her jewellery was all in pawn, and she was only just recovering from a long attack of illness which had compelled her temporarily to abandon her employment, which was that of "extra lady" at a spectacular house.

A letter from an "old friend," asking for an appointment "on a matter which was of the greatest importance to herself," brought an invitation to call at her lodgings, and cautiously, and cleverly, Mr. Guy Lawrence, who called himself by another name, broke the ice and sounded the young woman as to her willingness to "render a great service to a lady" for a consideration.

As soon as he was satisfied that the ground was prepared for the seed he wished to sow, Guy Lawrence informed Miss Helsham that a very near relative of his, a young lady, was determined to marry an old sweetheart of Miss Helsham's — Mr. Herbert Jephson — that the friends were strongly opposed to the match, etc., etc., and the interview ended by Maggie, who was desperately hard up, and bitter against the world, which she consid-



ered had treated her badly, consenting to carry out the system of attack suggested by her visitor.

The first thing she did was to write to Herbert Jephson a piteous letter, telling him she was in great trouble and imploring him for the sake of old times to see her.

The letter annoyed and worried Jephson considerably. I have said that his mouth and chin were weak—they denoted a certain weakness of character which had on one or two previous occasions led him into trouble which a stronger mind would have avoided.

He was distressed that this old entanglement should crop up just as he was on the eve of making Letty his wife. It made him nervous. He had visions of Maggie calling at the stage door to see him. He had lost all trace of her since he had sent her the £20, and he fondly hoped that she would trouble him no more.

Her letter made him nervous. He built up a series of imaginary troubles—he saw everything in the worst light, and instead of writing a firm and manly letter back he temporized, he was anxious not to make Maggie an enemy, and so he foolishly wrote back and made an appointment, hoping that he would be able to silence the girl by explaining his position, and helping her as far as he could out of her difficulty.

His letter was duly shown to Guy Lawrence, and an appointment was made at Maggie's lodgings. Jephson found her lying on a sofa. She was very ill she told him, almost unable to move. Then she cried, and told him that she had never been happy since he left her, that it was all his fault, but she had no one in the world to help her now, and she hoped, for the sake of old times, that Herbert would.

The man was terribly worried. He couldn't say anything harsh or cruel to the weeping invalid, and so again he temporized, and instead of telling her at once that he was going to be married, and that all communication between them must cease, he gave her money.



When he got home, he sat down and wrote a letter to her, telling her in writing what he had not had the courage to say, and he pointed out that under the circumstances he could not visit her again.

No reply was sent to his letter then, but a fortnight later the stage door-keeper informed him that a lady had called and asked for him.

Herbert Jephson instantly jumped to the conclusion that it was Maggie.

His face flushed crimson, as, while he was standing talking to the man, Letty and her father came in.

As soon as they had passed the stage door Jephson asked the man what name the lady gave.

“She didn’t give any name, sir, but she said you’d know, and she hoped you’d call on her to-morrow, as she wanted to see you particularly, and didn’t want to have to come out in the night-air.”

The message was a threat! Jephson understood it as such at once, and the blood left his cheeks.

Unless he called on her, Maggie Helsham intended to come to the theatre where he was acting with his future wife.

The cold perspiration stood upon his brow when he thought what might result if this system of persecution was continued. He knew enough of Maggie in the old days to know that she was careless of her words when her temper was aroused; that unless, he conciliated her, she was quite capable of waiting for him and insulting him, perhaps before Letty and her father.

The next day he came round to Miss Helsham’s lodgings again—this time furious and desperate.

The girl, stung by his words, lost her temper and grew furious too. She had a claim upon him. She wasn’t going to starve while he was rolling in luxury. He had cast her off and deserted her, *and the woman he was going to marry should know what he was and so should her father.*



Jephson shuddered, and the hot words he was going to speak died away upon his lips.

Maggie Helsham knew that it was Letty Klein to whom he was engaged.

Then the weakness of his character triumphed again. He lost his firmness and pleaded. All was over between them, had been long ago. Was it fair for her now to try and wreck the happiness of his life, the happiness of one who was dearer to him than life?

The girl pretended to be mollified, made all sorts of promises, with the tears in her eyes, and once more Herbert Jephson paid blackmail.

Had he been firm of purpose and strong of will he would have gone to old Conrad Klein and told him all, but he hesitated. It seemed to him such a dreadful thing to have to say that he was being persecuted by a woman who had been his mistress, and that this woman threatened to tell Letty everything.

The worry was telling upon him—he fell off in his acting, he was nervous on the stage. His trouble kept him awake at night, and his face began to wear a look of pain and anxiety. Letty noticed it, and feared that her lover was ill. He said that he had had bad headaches of late, but that he should soon be all right, and assured her that it was nothing.

And all the time Guy Lawrence looked on and saw in his rival's altered manner and look of depression, that the poison was beginning to work.

But, in the meantime, a greater wrong had been done. Old Conrad Klein had one day received an anonymous letter, informing him that his daughter's future husband had behaved infamously to a young woman, whom he had made his mistress, under the promise that she should be his wife; that he had cast her off, and allowed her to fall into a state of great poverty, and that the story having become known in the profession he was now visiting the



girl constantly, and endeavoring to smooth matters over, and to bribe her not to bring an action for breach of promise of marriage against him.

When the old violinist received the letter he was horrified ; a man with a poetic and chivalrous belief in woman—a man whose own married life had been one long idyll—he looked upon the sort of conduct attributed to Jephson with the utmost loathing and disgust.

Could it be true ?

If it were, Herbert Jephson was no fit husband for his sweet Letty. He would rather see her in her grave than the wife of a libertine. Should he show the letter to Herbert, and ask him to deny it ?

That would be an honorable thing to do, but the future happiness of his child was at stake.

If the charge were true Herbert would deny it. Alarmed at the discovery he might take means to prevent the truth being ascertained.

The name of the woman and her address were given in the letter.

Conrad Klein would see, would know the truth himself. If the story were a lie, a wicked fabrication of some enemy of Jephson's, then he should never be pained by knowing that such a vile charge had been made against him.

The old violinist had received the anonymous letter on the Saturday night at the theatre. On the Sunday he had been unusually grave. After dinner Letty came and sat by him, and talked in her quiet, happy way of Herbert and the future. Her dear old father was to live with them when they were married—nothing should separate them. And then on Sundays they would be able to sit together as they had done for years.

Letty looked up as she spoke at her mother's face. In their new home that sweet face would still look down upon her, she thought. It should hang over the mantle-



shelf just as it hung here. Her mother and her father should share the happiness of her married life.

The old man followed the tender gaze of the girl, and his eyes rested on his lost wife's face and they filled with tears. Was another great sorrow coming upon him now ; was he about to learn that which would compel him to dash the cup of happiness from his daughter's lips, to darken her young life with a cloud that perhaps must never be lifted ?

Unable to control his emotion, he pleaded a headache and said that he would lie down for a little. Letty was left alone. Herbert was not coming that Sunday. He had to go to see a friend in the country. The truth was that Herbert had gone to see a relative, a solicitor, who lived at Hertford, to ask him for his advice, for the situation was becoming unbearable.

Letty sat in her father's armchair, and took up a book of poems to read. She read till she was tired, and then laid her head back in the chair to dream.

As her hands fell down by her side in the great arm-chair her fingers touched something. She drew it up and looked at it. It was a letter—a letter which had fallen from her father's pocket.

Now Letty was her papa's secretary. All his correspondence was attended to by her. Between father and daughter there were no secrets, and being in the habit of reading all his letters she began to read this one without thinking. It might be one he had forgotten to give her—some matter which wanted attending to.

She read it half through before she understood what it was about. Then, knowing not what she did, she gave a little cry and read it to the end.

Then she dropped it as though it had been a burning coal, and started to her feet. "Oh," she moaned, "how vile, how wicked. It is not true, I know it is not true."

She was woman of the world enough to understand



all that the vile letter meant to her. For a moment she thought she was dreaming—that some hideous nightmare had come to her in her sleep.

But she looked down on the floor, and there lay the hideous thing at her feet.

Then, with a sharp cry of pain as though a serpent had stung her, she fell upon her knees, and lifting up her streaming eyes to the portrait of her dead mother, she prayed—prayed passionately, for help, for light in her darkness, for guidance in her hour of anguish.

And as she prayed, she grew calmer. Her mother's—face smiled on her still. There was no sorrow there, no cloud upon the brow, no dimness in those tender eyes.

The girl took it as an omen. This dastardly letter was a lie. Her Herbert was good and loyal and true.

In a moment she had made up her mind. Passing hurriedly into her little bedroom she put on her hat and her mantle, picked up the letter, and leaving a message with the servant that she had gone for a walk, she went out into the street, and, hailing a cab, told the driver to take her to Stamford-street, Blackfriars.

Letty Klein was going to call upon Maggie Helsham.

When Letty arrived at the house her heart sank a little, and for a moment her courage failed her.

What was she going to do?

To learn from this woman's own lips if the story was true, and if it was true to yield up her lover to the woman who had the greater right to him. Come what may, she would at least not be the one to rob her of him.

She asked to see Miss Helsham, but gave no name. "Say a lady on urgent business."

Letty was admitted, and found herself face to face with the woman Herbert was said to have so cruelly wronged.

Letty was only a woman after all, and just for one wee



moment, amid all her grief and pain, there was a sense of relief that this woman was not her superior—either in appearance or manner.

Letty hesitated a second, and then, summoning up all her courage, said, "Miss Helsham, I am Letty Klein."

Maggie's face flushed hotly. This, then, was the girl whose happiness she was trying to ruin. She hardly knew what to say, but she muttered, "Indeed."

Then all that was in Letty's overcharged little heart burst forth. She told Miss Helsham of the anonymous letter. She showed it to her, and then she begged her to say if it was true.

"And if it is?" said Maggie.

"If it is, I pity you from my heart, and, though it kills me, I will do all I can to make the man who has wronged you do you justice."

Poor Letty only spoke a little theatrically because it was the language of her everyday life. The words came from her heart, and every one of them caused her a throb of agony.

Maggie Helsham's better nature was moved by the spectacle of this beautiful girl standing there her champion, sacrificing herself and all that was dearest to her in life for the sake of a woman she had never seen before.

She was not particularly emotional, but the tears came into her eyes as she answered, "Miss Klein—I—I don't deserve your sympathy. I've been a wretch. Instead of pitying me you ought to hate me," and then in her wild impulsive way she told the whole story of the past, how she had left Herbert herself years ago and taken up with another man, and how she had allowed herself to become the accomplice of his enemy in trying to break off his marriage with Letty.

Then falling on her knees she implored Letty to forgive her for the wrong she had done. Letty raised her gently



and pressing her lips upon her cheeks, said "My poor girl, I do forgive you, let me be your friend and help you to lead a happier and a brighter life."

While the two girls were talking together the servant came in. "A gentleman wishes to see Miss Helsham." Maggie had forgotten that Guy Lawrence was to call that afternoon. He had followed the servant, the door was open, and Mr. Guy Lawrence found himself face to face with Letty Klein.

The whole vile conspiracy was revealed to her in a moment. Taking the anonymous letter from her pocket she advanced towards the dumfounded tenor. "Mr. Lawrence," she said, "I believe this is yours. If I were to show it to Herbert Jephson he would thrash you. I don't think you are worth that, so I give it you back again. Good-afternoon."

Letty Klein and Herbert Jephson have been married for some months. Old Conrad Klein, who lives with them, still has the place of honor by the cosy fireside on Sunday afternoons, and, smiling down upon the happy little family, the portrait of the dead mother hangs over the mantel-shelf.

The old man knows what his brave little daughter did about the anonymous letter, but Herbert will never know. Neither Letty nor her father wish him to think that they ever heard of the one mistake of his life. But the shadow of Maggie Helsham never lies upon his happy domestic hearth. The day after Letty's interview with her, Herbert received a letter, in which she expressed her sincere regret for the annoyance she had caused him, and promised never to worry him again.

Guy Lawrence, as soon as his engagement was up, left the Melody, and when last heard of was in America, where the waggish critics roundly accused him of keeping coronetted note-paper in his writing desk, in order to



write himself letters from English duchesses, which he always managed to leave lying about when anyone was coming to his dressing-room.

Brave little Letty Klein, how many girls would have had the pluck to grasp their nettle as she did hers. She had her reward. She crushed a scandal which might have haunted her all her life, and she is the happiest little wife in London, married—she says so herself and she ought to be the best judge—to the best husband in the world.



## A LADY-KILLER.

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THE element of chance is an all-important one in most mundane affairs. There is no end to the remarkable feats which this same "chance" will accomplish. "A lucky chance" and an "unlucky chance" are standing expressions in the every-day vocabulary of the country. Chance is a marvellous decider of battles; chance sways the destinies of statesmen; chance is the founder of half the fortunes that are piled up in business; chance brings about the largest percentage of marriages, and chance has a great deal to do with the death rate.

Into the detection of crime "chance" enters far more largely than the outside world imagines. If the detectives of all our great European capitals would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, they would have to confess that chance is their best friend.

It was chance that made me acquainted with one of the most remarkable scoundrels of the present day, and enabled me—but, as they say in the dear old-fashioned story-books, do not let us anticipate.

I was standing one night, about twelve months ago, at Piccadilly Circus, surveying a scene the like of which would not be tolerated in any other city of the world.

It was long past midnight, and yet the street from the circus, almost as far as the Royal Academy, was a laughing, hustling mob of well-dressed men and gayly-dressed women.

There was no mistaking the character of the ladies, or



why they were there. The police moved about, breaking up the groups that congregated, and exclaiming, mechanically, "Move on, please!" but their presence placed very little restriction upon the shameless licence of the mob.

Standing about, up side turnings and in dark corners, were some of the worst wretches in London, bullies and leviars of blackmail, scoundrels of the most degraded and loathsome type, men thoroughly well known to the police, yet, under the glorious freedom of the English law, allowed, without let or hindrance, to send their female accomplices, or rather their female victims, into this vicious mob, night after night, to seek their prey.

I have no wish to dwell upon the aspects of the plague spot. If I were to attempt to write what I know about it, and to paint it in its true colors, to tell the story of some of its well-known *habitués*, I should have to write in a style which would alter the character of these stories. I should shock and startle, when I wish only to interest and amuse. Some day I may venture to speak out, but it will not be under the cloak of fiction. The facts are too serious, too terrible for the mere story-teller to deal with. When they are marshalled it must not be for review, but for battle—for a war to the death between the mock morality which makes London the most openly immoral of our great cities, and the real morality which drives vice out of sight, where it cannot pollute the innocent, or shame the modest, or prey upon the weak and unwary.

I even ask pardon of the reader now for touching upon this scene at all, but it was necessary for me to do so, for it was while studying the "state of Piccadilly" that "chance" brought me for the first time face to face with the hero of this narrative—Mr. Hubert Zolway.

Two policemen and an inspector had just broken up a mob congregating round two young ladies, who were settling a trifling difference of opinion with their nails and



teeth, when a tall, military-looking man of about fifty-five, with an elegantly-curved gray moustache, came sauntering along smoking a cigarette.

Beneath his elegant fur-lined overcoat you caught sight of a white tie—that and his black trousers and patent-leather boots proclaimed the fact that he was in evening dress.

He was sauntering along, probably on his homeward way, and not taking much notice of the gay crowd about him, when suddenly a well-dressed woman caught sight of him as she passed. With a little cry she turned, strode after him, caught him up, and then, with a vigorous blow of her umbrella, knocked his hat off into the muddy street.

The gentleman turned round with an oath, gave a little start as he recognized his assailant, then picked his hat up and put it on his head, and attempted to pass.

But the woman stood in front of him, and, in the expressive language of the day, “let him have it.”

What she called him I need not say—probably many of the epithets which she flung at him in rapid succession would be Greek to the majority of my readers. But the one thing she did not call him was “a gentleman.”

To my surprise the man, though evidently ill at ease, made no reply. A little crowd had begun to gather, and the helmet of a policeman hove rapidly in sight.

The woman saw it.

“Now, give me in charge, Mr. Hubert Zolway!” she exclaimed. “Here’s a policeman coming. I won’t run away.”

Mr. Hubert Zolway had evidently no such intention. He watched his opportunity, pushed his way through the crowd, and walked rapidly up a side street.

When the policeman arrived, and exclaimed “Now then, what’s the matter here?” the crowd began to disperse.

The woman who had committed the assault didn’t wait



to explain matters to the policeman, but moved away with the rest, and the "incident" terminated.

I should have passed along myself and taken no further notice, but that my curiosity received a fresh fillip.

As the woman turned away I saw a man go up and speak to her. I recognized him at once as one of the cleverest detectives in London—a man who, after rising to high rank in the force, had left it to start as a private detective on his own account.

"Hallo!" I said to myself, "what does Jarvis want?"

And then it struck me that the incident might have been what is called a "put-up job"—that the woman, in committing the assault, was acting in concert with the detective, who wanted to have a good look at his man, possibly without his hat.

I knew Jarvis intimately, so, thinking I might have an opportunity of speaking to him, I followed him as he crossed the road to the quiet side of Piccadilly with the woman.

They walked up about as far as the Park conversing together; then Jarvis wished the woman good night, and turned back towards the circus.

I went up to him as soon as the woman was out of sight, and we shook hands.

"I saw that assault," I said, "and I'm anxious to know what it meant. Was it done for you?"

"No," replied the detective, "it was one of those chances that are always coming off in our favor. I never saw that woman before in my life, but I was watching the man."

"Oh, what is it—a divorce?"

"No, it's purely a private inquiry. The gentleman is understood to be about to marry a wealthy widow, the lady's male relatives don't altogether take to the gentleman, they fancy his antecedents are shady, and they have come to me to find out something about him. I've been



shadowing him for a week past without any success, but to-night chance has come to my aid. Chance is bound to do our work if we'll only give it time. Unfortunately, as a rule our clients are in a hurry."

"Then you have found out something from the lady?"

"Yes, she told me something herself, but she doesn't know enough. She has, however, put me on the right road to find out a good deal more. I fancy I'm on the track of a pretty little plot for a novel, but if Mr. Hubert Zolway is what I suspect him to be, the novel ought to be written by a Frenchman, and sold in yellow covers on the Paris Boulevards. I don't think Mudie's would stand it. Good-night."

I wished my detective good night, and we parted.

It was a month before we met again. It was the first night of a new ballet at the Alhambra. After it was over I went up to M. Jacobi to congratulate him on his beautiful music, and he told me that M. Goron, the celebrated chief of the French detective force, was in his room. Would I come in and shake hands with him? M. Goron had been excessively kind to me in Paris on more than one occasion, so I readily consented.

In M. Jacobi's room I found my old friend Jarvis. He and Goron, who was over here on business, were conversing earnestly together, and as I entered I heard the name of Zolway mentioned.

I stayed for some few minutes, while the conversation was general, and then I rose to leave.

"Are you going to stay in the theatre?" said Jarvis.

"No," I replied; "I'm going as far as the Strand."

"So am I. We'll go together."

We went across the stage, and out by the stage door into Shaftesbury Avenue.

"It's very odd I should have met you to-night," said Jarvis, as soon as we were outside in the street. "I was thinking of you just as you came in."



“Indeed.”

“Yes. You remember seeing that assault in Piccadilly Circus, and my telling you that I thought I was on the track of a plot for a novel?”

“You mean the Zolway affair?”

“Yes. Well, since I saw you I’ve completed my inquiries, and I have the gentleman’s dossier at my fingers’ end. Goron supplied me with the last link this evening, and the chain of evidence against the gentleman is complete. It’s a pretty strong one, too. I don’t think Samson and Sandow and all the strong men in Europe, if they tugged together, could break it.”

“Have you sent in your report to your employers yet?”

“I take it to them to-morrow, and after I’ve read it to them, I don’t think they’ll be troubled much with Mr. Hubert Zolway. He’ll think twice before he marries into a family that knows so much about him. A pretty marriage it would have been, too, when the scoundrel has a wife and four children in America already. I can’t tell you any more now, because my task isn’t finished till my report is made, but if you like I’ll come and see you one morning this week, and lend you my notes. There’s no reason the scoundrel shouldn’t be exposed, and his story may be useful to you.”

A few days later the “Dossier” of Mr. Hubert Zolway, the gentleman whose hat was knocked off in Regent street, was in my possession.

It would be impossible for me here to give all the details of the career of this *chevalier d’amour*, this squire of dames, this cavaliere servante, this professional companion of wealthy women, this despoiler of the demi-monde.

For years he had successfully plied his infamous profession, and still been received in society. The silence of his victims was generally assured. They could only speak by betraying themselves. The one woman who did speak, and who said enough to put the celebrated



detective on the right road to find out the rest, was the woman who knocked his hat off in Regent Street. He had despoiled her of £5,000, had taken her jewelry and sold up her home, and left her penniless. From a position of affluence she had come down to the streets through him, and, woman like, when she met him after a couple of years, she knocked his hat off, and treated him to a few objectionable, but richly-deserved epithets.

From that starting-point the detective set out on his exploration of the unknown history of Mr. Hubert Zolway's career.

"You find Jenny Martin—she knows more about him than I do."

That was the advice the Piccadilly circus lady gave Mr. Jarvis, and he at once set about trying to find Jenny Martin.

He inserted an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph*, "If Jenny Martin will communicate with so and so at such and such an address, she will hear of something to her advantage."

The address given was Jarvis's private one. A few days after the advertisement had appeared a clergyman called and sent up his card. The Reverend John Martin.

The clergyman stated his business at once.

"I have seen an advertisement," he said, "requesting information of the whereabouts of Jenny Martin. May I ask you for what purpose it is required?"

The detective hesitated.

"I don't know that I am at liberty to tell you that," he said, "it is a purely private matter."

"I have a right to know," said the clergyman. "Jenny Martin is my sister."

"Your sister!" stammered the detective.

"Yes, my unhappy sister. You probably know something of the poor misguided girl's story."

"A little."



“It has been to me a lasting grief and shame. It broke her father’s heart, it killed her mother. Now I have told you so much, perhaps you will be frank with me. Why do you want to know where my sister is?”

“My dear sir,” said the detective, honestly moved by the young clergyman’s evident distress, “let me at once relieve your anxiety. Your sister’s address is wanted that she may be asked a few questions about a man who goes by the name of Zolway—a man who I am led to believe robbed her of her property and treated her infamously.”

“I know nothing of my sister’s affairs beyond the fact that she ran away from home to live under the protection of a nobleman; that this man when he married behaved, as I suppose the world would say, handsomely—that he gave her a house and a large sum of money, and that she was robbed of everything by a scoundrel into whose clutches she fell. I presume this is the man you call Zolway.”

“Yes—now will you not tell me where your sister is? I will be frank with you. I am making these inquiries for the solicitors of a wealthy family. A member of it—a young widow—is infatuated with this fellow, and intends to marry him. Her family wish to save her from a worthless adventurer and a contemptible scoundrel.”

“I would rather, if you can do without my sister’s evidence, that you did not disturb her mind, or recall the past to her at present,” said the clergyman, sadly. “She is now in a refuge—a refuge founded by a religious society and managed by Sisters of Mercy. Six months ago the poor girl, penniless and heartbroken, ashamed to let her friends know how low she had fallen, was standing by the river-side at Richmond. She had determined to commit suicide. While she was making up her mind to take the last desperate step, two Sisters of Mercy passed her. With a sudden impulse she turned to them.



“ ‘Ah!’ she cried, ‘you are Sisters of Mercy; have mercy upon me. Save me from myself—save me from death.’ ”

These good women were struck with pity and compassion. They took her with them to the Home, and there she has been ever since. She who was highly-educated, a beautiful, high-spirited, lovable girl is now working as a servant there. It is part of the system, I am told. I would have taken her to my home, to be with my wife and my children, for I love my sister still, but I fear for her. At the Home she is guarded, tended, strengthened in her good resolution. The good women who have her in their care beg me not to remove her yet—not to let her be disturbed by news or visits from the outer world until her redemption is assured. This advertisement alarmed me. I feared it might be some one belonging to her troubled past who was seeking for her. Now may I ask that you will respect her sorrow and her shame and abandon your idea of questioning her about the past.

“Certainly,” replied the detective. “I heartily sympathize with you and with her. I have only one thing more to ask you. Did you ever see the man who robbed and deserted your sister?”

“Yes. I saw him once. I had found out where she was living, and I went to her to see if I could not induce her to give up the life she was leading. The man was there, and he refused to allow me to see my sister!”

The detective took from his pocket a photograph of Hubert Zolway and showed it to the Rev. John Martin.

“That is the man,” said the clergyman, “but I beg, I implore you, if your inquiries should lead to a public trial, to spare me. You must know what it would mean to me to stand up in a public court and tell the story of my sister’s life.”

“I give my word of honor, that whatever the result of my inquiries may be you shall not be dragged into it,” replied the detective.



The clergyman took the detective's hand in his and pressed it gratefully, and went sorrowfully away.

But he had left the detective in possession of one more chapter in the terrible Romance of London Life of which Hubert Zolway was the hero, or rather I should say, the villain.

. . . . .

An anonymous letter gave the detective the clue he had to follow up to add another chapter to what he called his "realistic novel." He followed it, and found that Mr. Hubert Zolway, after he had squandered the last farthing of Jenny Martin's money, enlisted the sympathy of a wealthy American lady who employed him to make purchases for her in the Art world. He managed so thoroughly to win her confidence that in six months she had parted on one pretext or another with over £5,000. This sum, it was understood, was to rescue her interesting protégé from a terrible pecuniary embarrassment which was hanging over him and embittering his life.

Having obtained this £5,000 he was perhaps not so careful as he should have been, and in some mysterious way a letter of a private and confidential nature, written by the lady to him, fell into other hands, and the lady was compelled to consult her solicitors, as the mysterious possessor of it demanded an enormous sum for its return, and threatened to make use of it unless the demand was complied with.

How the matter ended the detectives failed to find out. The solicitors refused to give him any information, but he ascertained that a month later that elegant and fascinating gentleman with the gray moustache had transferred his services to another patroness, an eccentric old lady of title, who was fully persuaded that he had been infamously used, and who was on the point of adopting him as her son and making a will in his favor, when she was taken seriously ill one day and had to send for a doctor.



Her regular medical attendant having been called away to an urgent case in the country, the servant went to another doctor. Here again chance shuffled the cards and altered the game. The doctor was shown into the library, and there saw Mr. Hubert Zolway. The men recognized each other, but their greeting was not cordial.

When the footman opened the door to ask the doctor to walk upstairs to his mistress's room, he was astonished to hear these extraordinary words falling from the doctor's lips :

"You —— villain, what right have you in any decent person's house?"

The doctor was standing up by the library table, gesticulating fiercely, and Mr. Hubert Zolway was up against the door, nervously twisting his elegant military gray moustache.

The doctor remained some time with the invalid old lady. After satisfying himself that she was suffering from a slight attack of liver complaint, he plunged at once into the subject which was uppermost in his mind.

What was the man downstairs doing in her house, and did she know his character?

The old lady, expecting she was going to hear her poor injured protégé vilified again over the wealthy American lady business, protested that she had heard the scandal, but she had reason to know that poor Mr. Zolway was the victim of cruel and jealous misrepresentation.

"Victim," exclaimed the doctor, "good God, madam, do you know what you are saying. Why, I attended the poor girl in her last illness."

"Girl!" exclaimed the old lady. "Why, she's fifty if she's a day, and she's alive. I saw her in the Park, yesterday."

The doctor saw that there was a misunderstanding, and he made haste to explain.

"Madam," he said, "If I speak plainly you must for-



give me, but it is my duty as I find that scoundrel here in your house, and evidently enjoying your confidence, to tell you what I know of him. Three years ago he visited at the house of a patient of mine, an officer's widow, with a young daughter, a beautiful girl. The wretch in some way or other gained the confidence of the mother, I believe he absolutely proposed marriage to her, and was admitted to her house as an honored guest. I'm not going to tell you the whole horrible story, but I'll tell you this, that he mercilessly betrayed and ruined the girl, and she died of shame and a broken heart, and when she was dying the unhappy mother, agonized with grief, learned that she herself had been infamously duped and robbed by her daughter's betrayer. He had induced her to let him manage her financial affairs, he had obtained her authority to sell her securities, and invest her money to pay her a larger percentage, and when the crash came she learnt that the new securities he had handed her were worthless rubbish, and that she had been swindled. You'll say if this is true, why didn't she prosecute. Why, because she would have had to drag herself through the mire—to tell the story of her dead daughter's shame. This is the reason that villains like the dastard downstairs prey upon society and go scot-free. Their victims for their own sakes, and for the sake of those dear to them, hesitate to publish their humiliation to the world."

"Now, madam," exclaimed the excited and indignant doctor, "perhaps you'll ring the bell and order your footman to kick that fellow out. If you don't like to ask him, ask me."

Mr. Hubert Zolway, once more the victim of what he called "atrocious calumny," that afternoon bade adieu to his adopted mother forever, and it was the doctor who had the satisfaction of adding this chapter to the dossier which the detective was compiling.



But once more the famous Chevalier fell upon his feet. He went to recruit his shattered nerves at Scarborough, and he made the acquaintance of the young widow, at the instigation of whose male relatives my friend Jarvis started his inquiries. Matters progressed so favorably, that the lady was on the point of leaving for the Continent where she was to be united to her fascinating adorer, when just in the nick of time the true story of the life and adventures of her hero was handed to her brother, a big burly Yorkshireman, who didn't mince his words or study his actions.

Armed with the dossier of his future brother-in-law he went to his sister's house, and though she raved and fainted and had hysterics and screamed and put her fingers in her ears, he stood with his back to the door and read it through, every word of it at the top of his voice not sparing her a single detail, (I have spared the reader a good many, because this is not France and I am not M. Zola or M. Dubut de Laforest), and finishing up by informing her that if she ever spoke to Mr. Zolway again he would break his neck and lock her up in a lunatic asylum.

He then went off to Mr. Zolway's chambers and found that gentleman was not at home. So he left a note. Mr. Zolway evidently received it, for he didn't call on the unhappy widow but took the evening mail for Paris and is now, according to the latest accounts, amusing himself at Monte Carlo, where it is rumored he has acquired extraordinary influence over a Russian Princess whose husband is in a lunatic asylum.

That is the true story, as far as I dare tell it, of a gentleman who until lately was a conspicuous figure in high-class society. His career is probably not ended, but there are reasons which will probably cause the remaining acts of his extraordinary life drama to be played on a foreign stage



There are doubtless dozens of people who will read these papers who will recognize in Mr. Hubert Zolway the man he is intended to represent. If he recognizes the portrait himself he will probably mutter something about an action for libel. But he will only mutter. He won't talk very loudly about it, especially when he remembers that his dossier is now complete, and that it is in the hands of those who know how to make good use of it.



## A BIJOU RESIDENCE.

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It was described in the house agent's circular as a compact little semi-detached bijou residence, with long garden and charmingly situated. As a matter of fact it was a six-roomed villa, ugly, dismal, low-ceilinged and damp. The long garden was in a neglected, chaotic state, and consisted principally of weeds, rubbish, and sooty, dejected trees. It was situated in one of those lonely by-roads of St. John's Wood, which even in the broadest daylight wear an air of mystery, and it had been in the agent's hands for over twelve months.

One autumn afternoon a tall, dark young man, of about two and thirty, who wore a small black moustache curled up at the ends, paused in front of the "Villa," and read the notice board, which was stuck up on the front gate, attentively.

"To let, with immediate possession. For particulars apply to Messrs. Brown and Co., House and Estate Agents Wellington-road, St. John's Wood."

"Quiet place, that," the gentleman muttered to himself. "Wonder what it's like inside."

It was impossible to see anything from the roadway but the top part of the villa.

A high wall, surmounted by trellis work thickly overgrown with ivy, completely shut out the vulgar gaze; and the front garden gate, by which access was obtained, was a solid door, with a little square flap let into it, which could only be opened from the inside.



The gentleman, after examining the exterior of the house carefully, walked up and down the narrow retired little road, and appeared to be studying it carefully. Although it was four o'clock in the afternoon all was as still as death. All the villas on either side were of a retiring disposition, and high walls and tall trees completely hid the modest inhabitants from observation.

"This is the very place," muttered the man to himself. "I wonder what the name of it is."

He walked up to the corner, and then found the name written up. He drew out his pocket-book and made a note. "Laburnham Road, St. John's Wood; The Retreat." The Retreat was the name which some former owner had given to the eligible villa, and it was still painted up above the garden door.

The next day a gentleman giving the name of Mr. Thomas Smith called upon the house agents, and made inquiries as to the rent of the eligible bijou residence, and requested to be allowed to look over it.

A clerk was sent to accompany him with the keys, and Mr. Thomas Smith carefully inspected the premises.

The house stood in a long dilapidated garden, some distance from the roadway. It was very quiet, very gloomy looking, and slightly out of repair.

Mr. Thomas Smith having inspected the rooms took a stroll round the garden. He noticed the trees on either side completely shut out the view of the neighbors, and that at the end of the garden was similarly protected.

As soon as he had completed his observations, he asked the agent's clerk how long the place had been empty.

"About twelve months, sir," was the reply.

"Anything against it?"

"Not that I know of. You see it's rather small, and that's what we think has prevented it's letting, but it might be made a very pretty little place."

"Yes, it might," replied Mr. Thomas Smith, thought-



fully. "I'll think about it and let you know my decision. By-the-by, what's the rent?"

"Very moderate, sir; only £45 a year."

The house agents saw nothing further of Mr. Thomas Smith for three days. On the fourth day he called at the office and expressed himself willing to take the house for seven years, provided they would accept a lump sum of £250 down.

They promised to consult the owner of the property, and Mr. Thomas Smith gave his address at the Langham Hotel. He explained that he was an American, that he was returning to America to fetch his wife to London, where he intended to settle. As no one knew him in London it would save the trouble and delay of writing out to America for references and all that sort of thing if he paid in cash and relieved the landlord of all anxiety in the matter.

The agents knew that the property was a bad one to let, that it was not in good repair, and that it would require a good deal of money laid out upon it to put it in a proper sanitary condition, and they thought the offer a good one.

A lease was prepared and signed, and on the appointed day Mr. Thomas Smith, in exchange for Bank of England notes for £250, became the tenant of that charming bijou residence known as the Retreat, Laburnham Road, St. John's Wood, and the keys were handed over to him.

He expressed himself quite satisfied with his bargain, and was very communicative with regard to his future plans.

He was going to lay out money on the place, and he didn't think he should begin the painting and decoration until next spring, as he wouldn't furnish it until his return from America with his wife.

Mr. Thomas Smith was evidently pleased, the agents were pleased, and the landlord was delighted. He had begun to think that he would have his bijou residence on



his hands until it committed suicide by falling to pieces, a thing it had been threatening to do for some time past.

You see these villas are mostly built to let, and the tenant is expected to prop them up in order to keep a roof over his head. When they don't let, and there is no tenant, the landlord has the terrible alternative of seeing them crumble to earth, or spending money on his own property, which is a thing no well-regulated landlord will do if he can help it.

. . . . .

Mr. Thomas Smith, the new proprietor of the Retreat, paid one or two visits to his property, accompanied by a man who looked like a builder. They would let themselves in, remain some time on the premises, and then come out and walk away conversing earnestly together.

Laburnham Road is not one of those roads in which the neighbors take much interest in each other. The postman must occasionally go down it, and the milkman, and the butcher, and the baker, but I have passed through it scores of times without seeing a living soul. And now I come to think of it, I don't ever remember to have seen a face at any of the upper windows (the lower ones are all hidden by the high garden walls), or a servant at the door, which, seeing that it is within half a mile of the Barracks, is remarkable.

The people who take houses in it evidently seek it on account of its quiet and seclusion from observation.

Mr. Thomas Smith (of America) was evidently not too desirous of attracting attention as a new-comer, for his visits were always paid in the dusk of the evening, and whether he came by himself or accompanied by the man who looked like a builder he usually looked cautiously up and down the road before he let himself in.

One afternoon just as it was dusk he came down the Laburnham Road accompanied by a lady. They were walking arm-in-arm and chatting together in the most amiable manner possible.



Outside the "Retreat" they halted for a moment while Mr. Thomas Smith felt in his pocket for the key.

"It's quiet enough here, Charles," said the lady as she glanced about her.

"Yes, dear, you might live here for years and nobody would know you. Not much fear of our being overlooked by our neighbors."

The key had been found and the garden door was open.

The lady gave a little cry as she caught sight of the eligible villa.

"Oh, dear, what a tumble-down place—why, it looks as if it were haunted."

"You see it at its worst, Jennie. Of course, it will want a lot of doing up, but if it suits you I can make a charming little place of it. These places never look at their best on a dull winter's afternoon, you know. Come in and see the rooms."

The lady passed into the garden and the door closed behind her.

An hour later, when the last vestige of daylight had gone, a man came quietly along Laburnham Road—it was the man who looked like a builder, and who had accompanied Mr. Thomas Smith to the "Retreat" on several previous occasions.

He halted in front of the house, and gently pulled the bell.

A moment or two afterwards a footstep was heard on the gravel path inside—then the flap in the centre of the door was lifted, and a man's white face was seen peering out in the darkness.

The builder-looking man was the first to speak.

"Is it done?" he said.

"Yes," was the reply.

Then the door was opened quietly, and the "builder" man passed in.



Half an hour later the little flap was lifted once more, and again a face was seen to be pressed against it.

It was the face of a man listening intently to hear if there was the sound of anyone moving on the pavement outside.

All was still as death.

The door opened and two men emerged. They were Mr. Thomas Smith (of America), and the "builder."

Mr. Thomas Smith pulled the front door to quietly as they passed out, then pushed it with his hand to make sure the lock had caught. The two men separated without a word, one going one way and one the other.

Where was the lady?

. . . . .

Twelve months after the taking of the "Retreat," a broad-shouldered, burly-looking man presented himself at Scotland Yard and desired to see one of the officials. He was taken to the Inspector on duty, and he made the following statement:—

"My name is Richard Marleigh. On the 18th of December last I assisted to bury the body of a woman who had been murdered at a house in St. John's Wood. I wish to give myself into custody."

Further interrogated he declined to give any information except that he would show the police where the body was concealed.

The man was rather peculiar in his manner, and the inspector at once had a suspicion that he was listening to one of those self-accusations so common with people whose minds are affected—accusations of crimes which exist only in the disordered mind of the narrator.

However, it was his duty to make a complete investigation, so he pressed for further particulars.

"Who was the murdered woman—who murdered her, and where was the body buried?"

"I decline to implicate anyone but myself," the man



replied. "It is on my conscience, and I cannot rest. I had £500 for my share of the transaction, but it did me no good. I have been a miserable wretch ever since, and I want to be taken into custody and undergo my punishment. Even if it is death it cannot be more terrible than the torture of mind which I am enduring now."

Finding the man obstinately refused to name his accomplice or to go into details, the Inspector thought the best thing was to humor him, and allow him, at least, to point out where the body was concealed.

So he told the man he might consider himself in custody, and requested him to take them at once to the scene of the murder.

"The body is buried in the garden of a little house called 'The Retreat,' in Laburnham-Road, St. John's Wood," said the man. "I will go with you now and point out the spot."

This looked more like business, and the Inspector, calling a Sergeant to accompany them, took a cab, and the party drove at once to the house in question.

On ringing the bell it was opened by a decent-looking, middle-aged woman, who was evidently terribly alarmed at seeing the Sergeant in uniform with Mr. Marleigh.

"Oh, Richard, what have you done?" she exclaimed.

The Inspector uttered a few reassuring commonplaces. "Don't be alarmed, madam," he said. "This gentleman is your husband, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, he is."

Leaving the Sergeant in charge of the self-accused prisoner, the Inspector took Mrs. Marleigh a little on one side.

"Now, madam," he said, "if you will answer me a few questions it may save a good deal of trouble. Is your husband in his right mind?"

"Well, sir," replied the woman, hesitating, and the tears coming into her eyes, "sometimes I'm afraid he



isn't. Ever since we've lived in this house, nearly a year now, he's had the queerest fancies about ghosts and being haunted, and he's been restless and queer as though there were something on his mind."

"Thank you," said the Inspector, "that will do for the present. We're just going out in the grounds to look about—just to humor him, you know. I think you'd better remain indoors."

Then he went into the hall, and beckoning the Sergeant to bring the prisoner along, the three men passed into the garden.

"Now," said the Inspector, "whereabouts do you say that the body is buried?"

"There," exclaimed the man, pointing with a trembling finger in the direction of a pear tree. "There, just under the pear tree. But don't let me stop here to see it brought to light. For God's sake don't. I couldn't look upon that poor girl's face again. I would rather die."

"Very well ; Sergeant go indoors with him, and don't let him communicate with anybody till I return."

The Sergeant and the prisoner went into the house, and the Inspector went out to get assistance in digging up the ground. A few doors up he saw some workmen busy relaying the drains of a house. They were hard at work with their spades and pickaxes.

A word to the foreman, and half-a-dozen of them accompanied him to the "Retreat." They set to work and dug diligently all round the pear tree. "This place has been dug out before and filled up," said the foreman.

Yes, the Inspector could see that, and he at once came to the conclusion that he was on the track of an unknown crime after all. But the men came upon nobody ; they dug and they dug deep.

Presently the foreman looked up. "Where we've got to now," he said, "has never been dug before. There's



nothing lying under here. You can see for yourself, it's all solid clay here."

The men stopped in their labor—one of them in shovelling the loose earth away from the side struck something with his spade.

"What's that?" said the Inspector, "a stone?" The man stooped down and felt in the loose earth with his hands.

"No," he exclaimed. "It isn't a stone—It's something gold."

Covered with mud and dirt, he drew out a circular object, and handed it to the Inspector.

It was a woman's gold bracelet.

"That's curious, at any rate," thought the Inspector to himself.

Then he ordered the man to dig on and to dig all round.

They dug right and left, but there was no trace of a body, not the slightest indication of the ground having been hollowed out except in the spot where the bracelet was found.

After two hours' hard work the Inspector told the men to stop for the present, and he went indoors to the prisoner.

"There's no body under the pear tree," he said. "Have you made a mistake in the place?"

"No," replied Richard Marleigh. "I tell you it is there. I helped to bury it myself."

"Come with me and point out the place again."

The prisoner went into the garden with the Sergeant and the Inspector.

He looked in amazement and terror at the great cavity the workmen had left.

"Good God!" he cried, "what does it mean?" It was there we buried her—there, and nowhere else. I swear it. Do you think the accursed spot isn't graven on



my memory? Do you think I haven't watched it night and day, expecting her to rise up out of her grave and accuse me?"

"Well," replied the Inspector, "there's no body there now, that's a certainty. Come, was it further to the left, do you think, or further to the right?"

"No, it was there, under the pear tree."

The Inspector was completely nonplussed. The discovery of the bracelet he said nothing to the prisoner about, for reasons of his own; but the bracelet had evidently been buried there, and there was evidence that the ground had been dug into in just such a way as a grave would be made. The digging out was not deep. The bracelet had been found in the loose earth near the surface; but, taking these facts, together with the man's persistent statement that a year previously he had helped to bury a body there, there was sufficient *prima facie* evidence of a crime having been committed.

But where was the body?

Had it been removed by someone unknown to Richard Marleigh?

That was the only solution to the puzzle which presented itself to the Inspector, and on that assumption he determined to act.

He took his prisoner back in custody and determined to charge him on his own confession. The publicity given to the details might lead to information being received from other quarters.

He also engaged workmen, and had the garden thoroughly dug out under the superintendence of the police.

And then, armed with the bracelet, he proceeded to make what inquiries he could, as the man obstinately refused either to give the name of the woman he declared had been murdered, or to implicate anyone else in the transaction.



The first thing he did that very afternoon was to ascertain who had let the house, and to go the agents.

From them he learned that a year previously a Mr. Thomas Smith, giving an address at the Langham Hotel, had taken the house for seven years, and paid a large sum for it in bank notes.

This Mr. Thomas Smith did not answer the description of the present tenant, Richard Marleigh, in any one particular.

Mr. Thomas Smith had possession given to him, and was the nominal tenant. It must have been Mr. Thomas Smith who gave the house over to Marleigh. Where was he, and was he the murderer—if the murder had really taken place.

Inquiries at the Langham were not satisfactory. There had been a good many Smiths staying there in December, three of them from America.

But the chances were that the hirer of the "Retreat" had given a false address. The agents remembered, when they thought over the transaction, that there had been no correspondence; that Thomas Smith had simply requested them to get a lease prepared and he would call and settle the matter at the office on a certain day.

That clue, therefore, was a very shadowy one.

The next thing was to ascertain if any young woman was missing from her home last December, and then to see if any of the friends could identify the bracelet.

It was on the bracelet that the Inspector relied to put him on the right track.

Inquiries were also at once instituted with regard to Richard Marleigh. These were obtained, easy enough, but were not of much value to the police.

Richard Marleigh had been a builder. Two years ago he had failed in business, principally owing to his gambling propensities. He had neglected his business for racing, of which he was passionately fond, and in his



bankruptcy he attributed his failure to losses on the turf.

Everything had gone to his creditors, and he had been compelled to take a situation with another firm. He was a better master than servant, and his salary was not a large one.

But a year ago his circumstances improved. He had taken possession of the Retreat, and furnished it, and a friend to whom he owed £100 confessed that he had paid him the amount since his bankruptcy.

The friend thought he had won it by betting. The Inspector was now inclined to think that it was part of the sum he had been paid for his share in the crime of which he accused himself.

Richard Marleigh was duly placed in the dock and charged on his own confession with having on the night of the 18th of December, 188—, been a party to the murder of a woman unknown—according to his own statement an accessory after the fact.

Such evidence as it was thought advisable to make public the police tendered, sufficient to obtain a remand. The prisoner persisted in his statement, but still obstinately refused to name the actual murderer, or to give the slightest clue to the woman's identity.

But for the finding of the woman's bracelet the man would probably have been discharged on the ground that he was the victim of a delusion, especially as the police surgeon was strongly inclined to the belief that the man's mind was affected. It was certain that for some time past he had drunk heavily, and self-accusation of fearful crimes is not an unknown feature of confirmed alcoholism.

The story, directly it got into the newspapers, attracted a great deal of attention, and the police were, as usual, inundated with applications from persons who had missing friends. It is marvellous what a number of people annually disappear in England, of whom all trace is lost, and whose friends never communicate with the police until a body is found which cannot be identified.



The album of the Unknown Dead which is kept at Scotland Yard is one of the grimmest and most terrible features of our modern civilization. Who are these men and women, old and young, whom nobody misses, whom nobody can identify, who are found dead, some victims of the cold-blooded assassin, some suicides, some poor wretches who have dropped down to die, or been seized with a fatal illness in the streets of the Great City, some the victims of accident, but nearly all buried at last as "unknown," their ghastly features preserved in that book of photographic horror which from time to time is opened that an inquirer after a missing friend may search for the absent one's features in the ghastly collection of London's myriad mysteries.

Hundreds of people wrote to, or called at Scotland Yard, to say that they had lost a relation and to suggest that the murdered person whose body could not be found, might be their lost one. The fact that it was a young woman who was supposed to have been murdered did not deter inquirers calling to suggest that it might be their grandfather who went out for a walk some years ago and never returned, or their daughter, aged ten who had not been seen since she went to school one morning, or their husband, who disappeared mysteriously twenty years ago.

There is absolutely no limit to the idiocy of the people who communicate with the police directly anything is found, whether it be a human body, or a dog, or a bank note.

I remember once losing my poor old dog Pickle (peace to her memory) and putting up a bill offering £5 reward for her recovery. I described her fully as a small black-and-tan bitch, and yet within forty-eight hours I have every kind of dog brought to my door, ragged little boys brought me retrievers by the dozen, a clergyman kindly called with a Newfoundland dog, a lady came round with a pug puppy, and a kind old gentleman walked five miles



with a greyhound which he had found in his back garden.

So it is with the police notices. Common sense seems to be the one thing lacking in the people who tender information, or come to identify bodies. One body will sometimes be claimed by half a dozen people, although not bearing the slightest resemblance to the person they have lost. These people, who worry and bother the authorities, seem to argue in this way. My grandfather is missing, the body of a youth of eighteen has been found—the youth of eighteen must be my missing grandfather. I am not exaggerating the case. Ask the police and they will tell you that I am rather understating it.

Hundreds of people came forward to tell wonderful stories, intended to prove that the unknown young woman whom Richard Marleigh had assisted to bury in a back garden was a missing relative of theirs, but not one of them could give the slightest information to assist the police, and not one of them could identify the bracelet, which, unfortunately, was an ordinary gold one, such as are sold by jewellers every day.

At the end of a month, there being absolutely no further clue, and most of the “missing friends” having been discovered by the police to be well and happy, and keeping out of the way, for reasons of their own, or absolutely outside the description of the “well-dressed young lady” given by the self-accused accessory to the murder, Richard Marleigh, was discharged, the police considering it would serve their purpose to keep him under observation.

There was nobody in the back garden, and you can't imprison a man for burying a bracelet.

But, though Marleigh was discharged, the police did not let their inquiries drop.

The Inspector who had charge of the case having failed to get anybody to identify the bracelet, was still busily engaged in endeavoring to find Mr. Thomas Smith, the gentleman who took a seven years' lease of the Retreat,



and had failed to come forward and explain under what circumstances he sub-let it or presented it to Marleigh.

“Do you believe there ever was a murder at all?” said a friend to the Inspector as they talked over the case.

“I don’t know what to think,” replied the Inspector. “The bracelet was there, the signs of a grave having been dug were there.”

“But where’s the body?”

“Exactly—where’s the body and where is Mr. Thomas Smith?”

The mystery of the Bijou residence engaged the attention of the Scotland Yard Inspector for a long time after it had passed out of the public mind. There was a certain element of romance in the self-accusation, the digging up of the garden and the finding of the gold bracelet, which appealed for a time to the newspaper readers’ imagination; but directly Richard Marleigh was discharged, the general idea was that it was a case of hallucination or incipient D. T., and that there never had been a body in the garden. The bracelet was certainly a curious thing to find on the spot, but that might have got there by accident.

A murder was discovered soon afterwards, one of the floating mysteries of the Thames, and in the new excitement the St. John’s Wood mystery passed out of public discussion, and breathed its last after the allotted space of nine days.

But Mr. Inspector by no means relaxed his efforts to obtain a clue to an enigma which fairly puzzled him, and put him on his professional metal. He kept the house and its occupants well under police supervision, and devoted all his efforts to tracing the American, or *soi-disant* American, who had hired the house and paid a lump sum in advance for it.

This struck the Inspector as suspicious. It looked as though Mr. Thomas Smith was anxious not to be identified. In the ordinary course of business he would have given



references, and had the correspondence concerning the lease forwarded to him, and he would have employed a solicitor.

The officer's theory was that if—there was always the if—a crime had been committed, the house had been hired for the purpose of the murder, and the victim had been buried in the garden before the place was occupied by Marleigh and his wife.

All this was, however, nothing but theory, and it would be impossible to advance beyond until either the body or the murderer was discovered.

With regard to the body, the only solution of the difficulty that presented itself to the Inspector was that it had been removed. Bodies are found about London, in cellars and arches, which have evidently been dead a long time, but only recently deposited there. Some of the most startling mysteries of the year 1889 are connected with the finding of murdered people who have been deposited in out-of-the-way places months after the crime was committed.

But in the St. John's Wood case it was difficult to see why a body once buried under such advantageous circumstances should be removed. The murderer would have everything to lose and nothing to gain by such a course. And yet the bracelet might in that way have been left behind, always supposing that the poor creature was buried, and she was murdered with her clothes and ornaments still about her.

Had the body been shifted from one part of the garden to another?

No!

Every inch of the ground had been thoroughly dug over and explored.

While prosecuting his inquiries right and left for the missing Mr. Thomas Smith, the inspector labored under a great disadvantage. The only description of the man he



had was that furnished by the house agent's clerk, and this was rather general than particular. To find a tall, dark man, with black hair and a small, dark moustache, is easy enough ; the difficulty is that you find such a number of them.

He had communicated with the American police, who replied : "Send further particulars." But these were just what he couldn't obtain himself.

But one day he received a visit from the house agent's clerk.

The clerk was in a state of great excitement. "I don't know whether this is any use to you," he said, taking out a torn leaf of an illustrated paper, "but this is awfully like the gentleman who took the 'Retreat,' only he hadn't a beard."

The inspector took the paper and looked at the portrait intently.

"It knocked me all of a heap when I saw it first," said the clerk. "The oddest part of the thing is the queer way it came into my possession. I went to a party at a friend's house the other night, and as it was at Norwood, and I couldn't get home without leaving too early, I arranged to stay all night. I took my bag with me, and in the hurry of leaving I left my slippers behind me. Two days afterwards my friend returned them to me, and they were wrapped in this page of newspaper."

"It's an illustrated American paper," said the inspector. "Is your friend an American?"

"No, but his brother is in New York, and he sends them an illustrated paper every week."

"And you say this is a likeness of Mr. Thomas Smith, who took the Retreat?"

"No, I don't say that. I say that the upper part of the face is exactly like him ; there is a look which brought him to my mind at once, but the beard hides the lower part, and he wore no beard."



"But he might have grown one since. Well, that's something to go upon, but not much. We'll see what it's worth."

The clerk left the paper with the inspector, who at once went systematically to work.

The portrait was that of Mr. Charles Goldberg, of Chicago, and the letterpress described him briefly as the Chairman of Mr. So-and-So's Committee. It was a political event that had called forth the portrait, and all that the inspector could gather from the letterpress was that Mr. Goldberg was a wealthy citizen of Chicago.

He at once wrote out to the American police and requested a little information, at the same time referring them to the paper in question, and telling them that the portrait bore a slight resemblance to the man he had inquired about, Mr. Thomas Smith.

In due course the answer of the American police was received. Mr. Charles Goldberg was an American, he was tall and dark, and his age was about thirty-three. He had only assumed the name of Goldberg some six months previously on his marriage with Miss Ada Goldberg, the only daughter and heiress of Mr. Heinrich Goldberg, a wealthy merchant of Chicago. His name was Charles Dickson. He was the young lady's cousin, and had adopted the name at the request of the father. On Goldberg senior's death all his property passed to his daughter and son-in-law. From inquiries the American police had made they had ascertained that Mr. Charles Goldberg had been in England for three years, but had returned to the States some little time previous to his marriage. He had only grown his beard lately after a severe attack of bronchitis. There was nothing known against him in America, except that at one time, before he left for England, he had been involved in some heavy gambling transactions, and it was understood that this was why he left his uncle's office and was temporarily



out of the old man's favor. It was understood that when old Goldberg was dying he sent a large sum of money to his nephew and requested him to return and marry his daughter and carry on the business.

This information required to be digested. It might mean a great deal, it might mean nothing. Certain portions of it undoubtedly fitted in with the theory of Mr. Goldberg of Chicago, being the Mr. Thomas Smith of America, who took the "Retreat."

Mr. Goldberg was in London at that time—at any rate he was not in America.

Mr. Goldberg had only recently cultivated the beard which destroyed a portion of his resemblance to Mr. Thomas Smith.

Mr. Smith had mentioned that he was returning to America, and intended to bring his wife back with him.

Mr. Goldberg had returned to America and had taken unto himself a wife.

Mr. Goldberg had been a gambler, and left his uncle's office through his gambling propensities. Richard Marleigh was a gambler. Gamblers frequently get thrown together and become accomplices in nefarious schemes, and there the Inspector halted for a short rest.

Supposing that it was Mr. Charles Goldberg who took the Retreat, and lured a young woman into it to be murdered, what could his motive be?

Hardly robbery.

Then he took this fact; that within six months of the period assigned by Marleigh to the murder, Goldberg, newly returned to America, had married a wealthy heiress.

Was this prospective marriage at the bottom of the crime, always supposing that Goldberg was Thomas Smith, and Thomas Smith was the murderer.

He had contracted a *liaison* over here, that would not interfere with his marrying in America.



But if he had *married* over here !

The hot blood rushed suddenly into the Inspector's cheeks, and he brought his fist down upon the desk. He believed that he was on the track at last.

If Charles Goldberg had married over here, had married an English girl, believing that he was out of his uncle's favor, and had nothing to hope in that quarter, and after his marriage had discovered that there was a chance of reconciliation, that the old man wished his daughter to marry her cousin and carry on the business, and inherit his vast wealth, if the young lady herself had been in love with him, this only daughter of a wealthy man, and had told her father that she would never marry anyone else !

If this had happened, then, might not this young fellow, tempted by the golden bait, have got rid of his English wife in order that he might be free to take the American bride and her millions.

The Inspector locked the American report up in his desk, and called to one of his men.

"Callaghan," he said, "just go down to Somerset House and ask Daddy Green to come to me."

If you have ever been to Somerset House, gentle reader, the chance is that you have seen Daddy Green and passed him without for a moment suspecting that you were in the presence of a remarkable character. Some day when I write the Drama of Life which has for its title "The Secret of Somerset House" I will tell you a great deal more about Daddy Green than I can find space for here.

He is a little, white-haired old gentleman, with round shoulders and slouching gait, and cunning little gray eyes, who passes his life among the great volumes of Somerset House.

He is a searcher, a searcher at the service of the public, an old gentleman who, for a small fee, will find for you the birth, the death, or the marriage you may be in search



of. Wonderful are the secrets, the romances, the dramas of life locked away in the breast of old Daddy Green.

He has seen strong men start and turn pale as he handed them the proof of the fact that the affectionate wife has a husband already. He has helped to restore many a fortune to its rightful owner, to prove the death of people still supposed to be alive, to lay bare the unsuspected secrets of Somerset House to many an anxious and often unsuspecting inquirer.

It was for Daddy Green, the searcher at Somerset House, that the inspector sent, and Daddy was soon at the Yard. It was by no means his first visit to that famous locality.

"Daddy," said the Inspector. "I have a job for you."

"Marriage?" asked Daddy.

"Yes, here are the particulars."

The Inspector handed Daddy Green a sheet of paper, on which he had written :

"Search for the marriage of Charles Dickson within the past five years, probably of American parentage. Age *now* about Thirty-three."

Daddy Green put on his spectacles and read the paper carefully. "It's a common name, rather," he said. "Haven't got any further particulars, have you? No second Christian name; it's a tremendous help to me when there's a good uncommon Christian name, in a search."

"I've told you all I know myself, Daddy," said the Inspector. "There may be no marriage of the man I want, but find one if you can."

Daddy Green smiled.

"If it's *there* I'll find it," he said. "I'll bring you everything that looks a bit like it. Five years is the limit—you're sure of that?"

"Yes," replied the Inspector, "and you may begin from the end of last year safely. I should think if there *is* a marriage it must have been between a year ago and four years ago."



"That's a start, any way," replied Daddy; and folding the paper up carefully and putting it into a well-worn, greasy pocket-book, that fairly bulged out with similar memoranda, he nodded to the Inspector, and went back to Somerset House, to set to work among the solemn-looking, matter-of-fact volumes with which its shelves are loaded—solemn and staid and sober tomes, yet every page of them teeming with records of the romance of real life—the romance of the cradle, the altar, and the tomb.

It was noon on the following day before Daddy came to report progress to the Inspector. He had selected half-a-dozen marriages of Charles Dicksons as the most likely, and he and the Inspector went over them together.

He went slowly through them all, reading them one by one till he came to the fifth.

This he read, and read again :

Charles Dickson, bachelor, gentleman; age 31; father dead.

Jane Ellis, spinster; age 22; governess; father mercantile clerk.

It was a marriage before the Registrar, and it had taken place about a year-and-a-half previously.

"I'll try this one before you look any further, Daddy," said the Inspector.

He went to the Registrar's office with the copy of the certificate. The Registrar couldn't remember what Charles Dickson was like. He married so many people, and it was all over in such a few minutes. Who were the witnesses? James Thurton and William Jones. Oh, they were his two clerks, the usual witnesses kept on the premises for young couples who came unprovided.

The two clerks were called in. They taxed their memories. They could remember nothing of the parties. They hardly looked at the names on the certificate, except in a general kind of way, just as a shopkeeper's clerk would look at the name on a bill he was making out.



The Inspector showed them the portrait of Mr. Charles Goldberg.

No, they didn't remember anybody like it. The Registrar looked at it. Yes, he had seen somebody like it. He had married somebody like it, but he didn't think the man had a beard.

That was curious. It was the same remark the clerk at the house agent's had made.

The Inspector thanked the Registrar and retired.

He then went to the Retreat, and asked to see Mr. Marleigh.

Marleigh was ill. The wife with tears in her eyes, told the Inspector that he had been gradually getting worse since his return from prison, and that now he was breaking up altogether.

The Inspector ascertained who was attending the man, and interviewed the doctor.

The doctor regarded the case as hopeless. He was convinced the man's brain was softening. No reliance could possibly be placed upon any statement he made. He was certainly suffering from delusions. He would not live long.

The Inspector was allowed to see the sinking man. He could not get anything from him except that he had assisted to bury a murdered woman, and she was haunting him. He told the story of the burial again. The body had been put in the grave prepared for it under the pear tree, and covered over with earth for the night. They had both been too nervous to complete their task that night. On the following morning they had hastily filled the grave up, and were able in the daylight to remove all traces of the ground having been disturbed. The man was weak and slowly dying. To worry him further was useless.

The Inspector now determined to devote his entire attention to Mr. Charles Goldberg. He might not be



able to prove that he was the Charles Dickson who married Jane Ellis, but he might be able to prove that he was *not*, and that would be something.

He also put one of his men to try and trace the Mrs. Dickson who had formerly been Jane Ellis. If she were alive of course it was no good following that scent any further.

Just as he was about to consider the advisability of getting permission to go to America himself he received a cable from his confrère on the other side.

“Goldberg and wife left for Liverpool yesterday by Celtic.”

When the White Star steamer, the Celtic, arrived in the Mersey, among those who went off in the tug to meet it was our friend the Inspector. He had no difficulty in getting Mr. Goldberg pointed out to him. He recognized him at once by the newspaper portrait.

His wife was a plain, amiable-looking young woman, of about six and twenty. The Inspector came on the tug to the landing stage with them and followed them to the North-Western Hotel where he also engaged a room.

Of course, he managed to have a few words with the lady's maid. Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg were going to the Grand Hotel, Northumberland Avenue. Rooms had already been secured for them. They were leaving the next day.

The Inspector left the next day and returned to Scotland Yard, after satisfying himself that the Goldbergs were at the Grand. Having opened his letters he went up to the house agents and saw the clerk just as he was leaving, and made an appointment for him to go with him to the Grand the next morning.

The next morning, having ascertained that a carriage was ordered for twelve o'clock to take Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg out, the clerk was duly stationed at a post of observation near the Grand entrance. The Inspector, in plain clothes, was with him.



Directly Mr. Goldberg came out the clerk touched the Inspector's arm, and they walked away together.

"That's the gentleman who took the Retreat of us. I'll swear to him now," he said.

The Inspector now set his wits to work for a grand *coup*. He had not the slightest ground for charging Mr. Goldberg with anything, or for detaining him, and yet he was convinced that there *was* a crime to be brought home to him in connection with the mysterious hiring of the Retreat.

While he was arranging his plan of action the man employed to trace Jane Ellis reported that he had traced her from the address in the certificate. She had lived there under the name of Jane Ellis. The people there did not know she had ever been married. She had left about the date of the marriage, and they did not know what had become of her, but they had forwarded letters by her directions to Miss Ellis, care of Mrs. Dickson, to an address in Lloyd Square, Clerkenwell. At Lloyd Square they remembered Mrs. Dickson perfectly. She had lived there with her husband, whose description fairly answered that supplied to the man by the Inspector. It was in December, 188—, that they left; the landlady remembered the circumstances perfectly. Mr. Dickson said they were looking for fresh apartments. By referring to the rent book she found that it was on the 18th of December that they went out together in the afternoon and did not return. She thought it curious, but the next day Mr. Dickson came and said they had found fresh apartments, paid up the rent and took the boxes away. She had seen nothing of either of them since.

The 18th of December was the night fixed by the man Marleigh as the night of the murder. The Inspector felt sure that he was on the right road now. The missing woman was Mrs. Dickson, formerly Jane Ellis, and the murderer was Charles Dickson, now Charles Goldberg.



But to charge him it was necessary to find some portion of the body, something on which an inquest could be held. You can't hold an inquest on a bracelet.

The Inspector was at his wits' end what to do. But there were still further proofs which might be accumulated. In the certificate the name of the girl's father was mentioned, John Richard Ellis. He could be traced if he were alive, and he might be able to supply some missing link.

After considerable search and inquiry a John Richard Ellis was traced. He was an old man living in two small rooms in Walworth, and was a widower. He lived alone on a pension which his former employer allowed him.

Interrogated by the Inspector he told a startling story. He had a daughter, Jane Ellis, who was a governess. She married much against his will a young fellow named Dickson, a man who was a gentleman, but a gambler and who attended races and backed horses. She lived in lodgings by herself before she married, as he at that time had a second wife, and Jane and her stepmother did not agree. She told him one day that she had married Dickson and was living with him as his wife. He did not visit her, as, owing to family matters, they were not very great friends.

"Where was his daughter now, did he know?"

"Oh, yes, she was dead."

"Oh, he knew she was dead. Did he know where she was buried?"

Yes, for he buried her himself, and went to her funeral.

The Inspector opened his eyes to their widest extent. He had been anticipating the last link in his chain of evidence, and here was Jane Ellis's father assuring him that he had buried her himself.

"You are sure you are not making a mistake?" gasped the Inspector. "Wait one moment."



He drew from his pocket the portrait of Mr. Charles Goldberg, covered the name over, and showed it to the old man.

“Was that your son-in-law?”

The old man looked at it long and earnestly.

“It is exactly like him,” he replied, “except for the beard. He only wore a moustache.”

“Now tell me all you can,” said the Inspector. “Where did you bury your daughter, and of what did she die?”

“Her death was a mystery.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the Inspector, eagerly.

“Let me tell the story my own way. One night, about a year ago——”

“Give me the month if you can.”

“Well, it was December, I know, because it was just after Christmas Day.”

*After Christmas Day*, and the date of the murder fixed by Marleigh was the 18th of December. The whole of his elaborate theory was breaking down.

“I should think it would be about two days after Boxing Day; at any rate it was in the same week,” continued the old man. “One night, on my return home, my wife, who was then alive, informed me that some one from the Hospital had called and requested me to come and see my daughter, who was lying there dangerously ill.

“I hastened to the hospital and found the poor girl dying, but able to converse with me. All she would tell me was that her husband had treated her cruelly and deserted her, and that in a fit of despair she had tried to commit suicide by poisoning herself. The authorities at the hospital informed me that she had been found in the streets at an early hour in the morning of the 19th of December, senseless, and had been brought there.

“She was evidently suffering from poison, and her hands and face when she fell were covered with mud and mould and dirt. It was supposed she had poisoned



herself in a garden or some such place and fallen down in the mould, but coming to herself had staggered into the streets, possibly to get assistance, but had fallen senseless again."

"Whereabouts was she found on the morning of the 19th of December?" exclaimed the Inspector.

"In the St. John's Wood Road," replied the father, "that was stated at the inquest."

"Ah! of course there was an inquest."

"Yes. I and the doctor were almost the only witnesses. The poor girl had told her own story, and it was of course accepted. Her husband had left her, and she had poisoned herself. That was all she said. The medical evidence tallied with her own statement that she had taken poison. But she had recovered from that. What killed her was shock to the system."

"One moment," exclaimed the Inspector, a sudden thought striking him. He took out the gold bracelet found in the grave beneath the pear tree and showed it to the old man. "Did your daughter ever wear a bracelet like that?"

The old man took it in his hands and examined it. "Yes. I remember this bracelet. She showed it to me once, and told me her husband had given it to her. I believe she always wore it."

The Inspector rose and took his hat and went out into the air a bewildered man. The young woman whom Marleigh had assisted to bury in the garden in the Retreat, after she had been murdered on the 18th of December, had died in a hospital many days later, and the coroner's verdict on her own dying statement was that she died from the after effects of poison administered by herself.

One little experiment the Inspector tried, just to make sure that he wasn't making a fool of himself.

He sent an anonymous letter to Charles Goldberg at the Grand Hotel. There were only these words on a sheet of paper—



“Ought you not to put a headstone over Jane Ellis’s grave, beneath the pear tree?”

Two days afterwards, on making inquiries at the Grand, the Inspector was informed that Mr. Charles Goldberg and his wife had suddenly left London, called abroad by urgent private affairs.

“I thought so,” cried the Inspector. “That man believes, as Marleigh did, that his first wife’s murdered body lies in the garden of the ‘Retreat,’ which he bought to be her sepulchre.”

But it was useless to follow the case any further; there was no charge, even of bigamy, for Jane Dickson was undoubtedly dead before her husband married again. Murder there could be none, for the woman, according to her own dying statement in the hospital, committed suicide.

The Inspector has a theory which may be the right one. He believes that the poor woman was poisoned in the house in some way by her husband. After she was, as he believed, dead, she had been hurriedly buried, and the earth lightly thrown over her, and then the men had left her, intending to resume their task in the morning, and see that the ground was all right.

The woman must have come to and freed herself from the loose earth and escaped into the street when she was found. In struggling with the earth upon her, her bracelet might easily have come off.

Whether the woman, to deceive her murderers, had sense enough to throw the earth back again that she had displaced, one could never know, but it is probable that the men in their terror hastened to fill up the place and remove all trace of their crime with the daylight to guide them, and were too conscious-stricken and terrified to remove any of the earth to look upon the features of the murdered woman again.

Marleigh, the Inspector concluded, had been bribed by



a large money payment to assist in removing the traces of the crime, and might not even have known his employer's real name.

This may be only theory, but the fact remains that everything points to the fact of a woman having been buried in the deserted garden of that bijou residence, and having died days afterwards in a London hospital.

Mr. Charles Goldberg is beyond the reach of the law, but it is probable that his wealthy father-in-law's millions are powerless to make him either happy or comfortable, and that he will be haunted to the last day of his life by the remembrance of the anonymous letter he received at the Grand Hotel.

The whole story has been told me again and again by the Inspector, who has now retired from active service, and I never pass Laburnham Road without looking at the modest and retiring little bijou residence called The Retreat. I noticed the other day that it is to let again at a moderate rental. Mr. Thomas Smith's tenancy has evidently expired.



## GUNNING'S LUCK.

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MR. EBENEZER GUNNING, of Marshton, was a citizen of credit and renown in Marshton. From humble beginnings, he had, by a little industry and a great deal of luck, arrived at the proud position of being looked up to as one of the wealthiest men in the town. A great man in all local matters, a generous contributor to all local charities, and a thorough-going and uncompromising Radical, it was not surprising that Mr. Ebenezer Gunning had made up his mind that "some day" he would go in for Parliamentary honors, and gratify the ardent desire of a large section of his fellow-citizens that he should represent them in the great legislative assembly at St. Stephen's.

Over and above his wealth, his popularity, and his Radicalism, Mr. Gunning, who was now in his fiftieth year, had a tremendous claim upon the suffrages of his fellow-electors—he was a fierce anti-vaccinationist.

Marshton, which is a medium-sized town in the Midlands, is famous among other things for the peculiar views of its inhabitants on the subject of vaccination.

It is a quiet, dull red-bricked town, in which the music hall is down a side street in order that the people who wish to patronize it may enter its portals secure from observation. It is a town in which the streets, main streets and side streets alike, are deserted after nine p.m.



Nothing is capable of exciting the Marshntonians except a prosecution for a breach of the Vaccination Act. The moment it is announced that another Marshntonian is going to prison for refusing to have his baby vaccinated, the entire town gives itself up to delirious excitement, and every available musical instrument in the place is pressed into the service of "Britons never shall be slaves."

On an occasion of this sort the inhabitants have been seen in the public streets as late as eleven p.m., and shouts and choruses have been heard to proceed from little bands of young men assembled outside the Coffee Palace in the High Street as late as midnight. The shouts and choruses are, at such times, plentifully interspersed with the name of the bold martyr, who has allowed himself to be marched off to durance vile, rather than comply with the law against which he has the fierce and uncompromising local prejudice.

It was after one of these local demonstrations that Mr. Ebenezer Gunning, who had taken the chair at a big meeting, was walking quietly home by himself to his residence, which was about a mile out of the town on the main road to the race-course.

He had had a tremendous reception at the meeting. In his blunt, straightforward way, he had given off his opinions, prefacing them, as usual, with the statement that "they all knew him," and that he was a self-made man.

"You all know me in Marshnton; you knew me when I wasn't what I am now, but Joe, the waiter at the Black Bull—I was always called Joe, though my name was Ebenezer, because Ebenezer was a bit too chapelly. You knew me before I made my fortchin'; you knew me when I was makin' it, and you know me now I've made it. When I was Joe Gunning, the waiter at the Black Bull, I was allus the fust to raise my voice against the tyranny of this infamous lor, and now I ride in my carriage, and



has my footman behind my chair, and my name's Ebenezer Gunning, Esq., my voice is still heard as loud as hever on the side of truth and justis." (Frantic cheering.)

That was Mr. Gunning's speech—it had been his speech on many previous occasions, and it never failed to draw forth uproarious cheers, especially that part of it which referred to his previous position as Joe, the head-waiter at the Black Bull Hotel, the leading commercial house of Marshton.

Some men who had arrived at Ebenezer's position would quietly have allowed the past to slide; he never gave it a chance. He told his story to every stranger to whom he was introduced, to every guest who sat at his dinner table. He was proud of it, proud that he who 15 years ago was a head-waiter, and not over well-to-do, owing to a fatal habit "of having his bit on his fancy" for nearly every important race in the year, was now a wealthy citizen—a man of money, a man of houses and of land, retired from business, and with nothing to do but devote himself to his good little wife and his charming daughter Minnie, and the good of his fellow-citizens.

As he walked home from the meeting to his residence and left the lights of the town behind him, he fell into a reverie.

"Fifteen years ago—and, why, God bless me, it is fifteen years ago almost to a day, for it was Marshton Race week as it is now."

A quick step behind him.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Mr. Gunning. "Who's that?" and he buttoned his coat well over his big watch chain, remembering that during race week there are some queer characters about.

He turned round to see who was walking behind him, and saw a man coming on quickly.

It was too dark to see what kind of a man, so to be on



the safe side, Ebenezer grasped his stick firmly and stepped out.

But the man gained upon him. He was evidently quickening his pace. Presently he was right up to him.

"I beg your pardon," said the man as he came up by his side, "if I have made a mistake, you will pardon me, but are you not Mr. Ebenezer Gunning, who spoke at the meeting to-night?"

"Yes, sir, I am," replied Ebenezer, still walking on and still grasping his stick.

"I followed you from the meeting and missed you in the crowd," replied the man. "I only caught sight of you just now in the town; and I didn't like to speak to you while you were with your friends."

"Well, sir, what is it you have to say to me that's so important that you've followed me all this way?" replied Ebenezer, trying to get a look at his companion's face.

"I heard you tell the story at the meeting of how fifteen years ago a man you had done a service to gave you a hundred-pound note, and how that hundred pounds had been the beginning of your good fortune."

"The story's true; what of it, sir?"

"I was going to ask you——"

"To try the same experiment and give you a hundred pounds, eh?" said Ebenezer, speaking the thought that was in his mind.

"No," replied the stranger; "I was going to ask you if you would recognize your benefactor if you saw him."

"Yes, I think I should."

The stranger put his hand in his pocket, drew out a match box, and struck a light; for a moment the glare of the fusee was full upon his face.

"Good heavens above!" exclaimed Ebenezer, starting back. "I—I can't be mistaken—tell me, tell me, sir, tell me at once—you were the man."

"I was," replied the stranger.



“My dear sir, oh, my dear sir,” cried Ebenezer, seizing his hands, “how I have longed for this moment. I hadn’t time to thank you. You were off before I could say much. Come to my house, sir, come to my house. Let me introduce you to my wife and daughter, let me introduce you to my fellow-townsmen. Ah, you didn’t know what you were doing for me that night. You made Joe Gunning, Ebenezer Gunning Esquire, and you’ll find, sir, that Ebenezer Gunning ain’t ungrateful, sir.”

“My dear sir,” replied the man, “I am delighted to think I was of such service to you, but I must beg that you won’t make too much of the matter. I will accept your hospitality to-night with pleasure, but I must entreat that, except from your own family, you will keep my identity a secret.”

“No, no. All the town shall know it.”

“Then,” said the stranger, “I shall say good-night.”

Ebenezer Gunning seized his benefactor by the arm. He wouldn’t hear of such a thing. But the benefactor was firm. At last a bargain was struck. The benefactor agreed to accompany Ebenezer to his house on the strict understanding that, with the exception of Mrs. and Miss Gunning, no living soul was to be told that he was the donor of the lucky hundred-pound note.

As they covered the remaining half-mile that separated them from Mr. Gunning’s residence, they chatted excitedly about the past. At least Mr. Gunning did; the stranger, beyond asking a few questions, was remarkably cool and collected.

“And so that hundred pound note really was the commencement of your making a fortune, Mr. Gunning?”

“Yes, sir, it was.”

“Then I’m very glad I gave it to you.”

“It was right down generous of you. I never quite understood why you did it.”

“Well, you saved my life.”



“You said so. But I never quite understood how, and now as we’ve met again after all these years p’raps there’s one or two points as you’ll clear up for me. Fifteen years ago this very race-week as ever is I’m a-leaving the Black Bull, it being my early night off and a-goin’ home to my little crib where I lived then. I was just at my door when I hears a-hollerin’ and a row, and I sees you a runnin’ like mad with three or four fellows a runnin’ after you. Your face was smothered with blood, your coat was torn, you looked mad with fear.

“‘Save me,’ you says. ‘They’ll murder me. Save me and I’ll give you anything you like.’ You’d seen me open my door with the key, you pushed by me and dashes in afore the chaps that was after you, was near enough in the dark to see what has happened.

“I was hesitating when you shoved something in my hand. It was a bank note. ‘Take this,’ you says, ‘and shut the door, for God’s sake.’

“You pulled me in and banged the door to for me, and stood there in the ’all panting for breath and trembling. We heard the fellows come on cursing and swearing. ‘He went this way,’ says one. ‘He’s turned the corner, then,’ says the others, ‘come on, or we shall lose him.’

“Then the sound of their feet and their cursing and swearing went farther and farther away till the street was quiet.

“‘Thank you,’ says you, and without another word you pulls the door open afore I could stop you, and went out into the street again.

“I run to the door and looked after you. I saw you bolt with all your might in the opposite direction to what the other chaps had taken, and that’s the last I ever set eyes on you till now. And when I struck a light in the ’all and looked at what you’d given me, expecting to see a fiver, I’m hanged if it wasn’t a Bank of England note for £100.”



“Yes,” said the stranger, speaking for the first time since Mr. Gunning commenced his narrative. “I found it out afterwards. I had intended to give you a five pound note, but I had given you a hundred in mistake. I had been racing, and the notes must have got mixed.”

“I thought so,” exclaimed Ebenezer; “and so I owe you £95. My dear sir, to-morrow morning you shall have it, and with interest. But now you must answer me a question. Why were those chaps after you?”

“My dear Mr. Gunning,” replied the stranger, “that is easily explained. At that time I was, as I am now, a racing man. But I was a beginner at the business then, and quite green. I had left my father’s office, like a foolish young man, to back horses, encouraged by a little luck I had had over the Derby. I had won £300, and I thought it a fortune, and betting better than business. I travelled from meeting to meeting, and I came to Marsh-ton. During the day, on the course, I foolishly made friends with a stranger, who seemed a gentleman. He noticed me take a bank note from my pocket-book to pay a bet, and must have seen that the book was well filled. That evening he introduced me to the smoke-room of his hotel, where we met some more nice fellows. We talked racing, and at closing time, when I got up to go to the hotel at which I was staying, I was the worse for liquor. I believe they had put something in my drink. They said they would see me home. I got better in the cool air, and my suspicions were aroused.

“Suddenly, in a quiet street, one of them gave me a tremendous blow in the face. They expected it to knock me down. Fortunately it didn’t, and I took to my heels and ran for my life. I saw you at your door. I dashed in; you know the rest, and that is the true story of how it all happened.”

“Wonderful!” exclaimed Ebenezer, “but not so wonderful as what happened afterwards. I was a bit of a



better, you know. I told all my friends about having £100 given me. It got about all over the town, for Joe, the head waiter at the Black Bull, was pretty well-known, I can tell you, and a bookmaker as used our house he says to me, 'Joe, I'd have a dash now and make that hundred into something worth having.'

" 'Would you?' says I.

" 'Yes, I would,' says he, 'have a dash on something.'

" 'There was a big handicap coming off in a fortnight, and I'd a tip for it from one of our commercial gents, who always got good information, so I says: 'Well how much Cherrybob for the big race?'

" 'Well,' he says, 'there's nothing like having a long shot. I'll lay you whatever it's quoted at in to-night's paper.'

" 'Done,' I says. 'I'll have £25 on it, and if I lose it I'll put the rest of my £100 in the bank, and reckon I've saved £75.'

" 'That night when the paper came in I turned to the racing, and Cherrybob had gone back in the betting and was 40 to 1.

" 'When the bookmaker came in he says, 'I've booked that to you, Joe—forty ponies—and I hope I shall have to pay you. Where's the pony?'

" 'Well, it went against the grain changing that £100. I had a superstition about it, so I said 'I'll pay you to-morrow,' and instead of changing the hundred, which the missus had taken care of and sewed up in her stays, God bless her! for safety, I drew all my money out of the savings bank, and borrowed a fiver to make it up, and gave the bookmaker his £25.

" 'And I'm hanged if Cherrybob didn't come to ten to one before the race, and win in a canter on the day, and there was I with a thousand pounds. Me, Joe, the head-waiter at the Black Bull with a thousand pounds.'

" 'That was a bit of luck,' exclaimed the benefactor, 'a tremendous bit of luck.'



“Yes, and it was the beginning of more. I didn’t have another bet after that, the missus wouldn’t let me, but presently with that thousand and a little bit as I’d got, and what the brewers, and distillers advanced, I took a little place of my own, and if you believe me, sir, it seems as if there was magic in it—I did a tremendous trade.”

“The story of how I got my start was an advertisement, and people came in to talk to me and it got to be quite a rendyvoo, especially for the sporting people, because of my having been a sporting chap, and also for the political party, as is a very big party here through my being so strong on the vaccination question, and in ten years, what with one thing and another, I’d changed the house and made it a tip-top place and made a fortune in it, and the money I made I put in another speculation that nobody believed in till I took it up, and then the whole town followed “Gunning’s luck,” as they called it, and the shares what was 2s. 6d. went up to £5 afore long. and, to make a long story short, here I am after 15 years, retired from business, sir, and the owner of some of the best property in the town, and I don’t think there’s many in the place as is much better off, and here we are, sir, at my house—come in, come in, and you’ll have a hearty welcome from my wife and daughter, I can tell you, when I tell them that the unknown benefactor as give me the £100 that was the beginning of Gunning’s luck.”

. . . . .

It was the next morning, and Ebenezer Gunning, his wife and daughter, were seated at breakfast. Their guest “the benefactor,” as Mr. Gunning called him, had not yet come down.

“What do you think of him, my dear,” said Mr. Gunning.

“Well, Ebenezer, he seems a very well spoken and nicely behaved sort of man, but there’s something about him I don’t like.”



“He’s not a gentleman, papa,” said Minnie.

“Well, perhaps not, my dear. But he behaved very gentlemanly to me, and he’s our benefactor. We owe all we’ve got in the world to him, so you must be polite and nice to him.”

“Oh, certainly, my dear,” said Mrs. Gunning.

And she was very polite, and so was Minnie, and Gunning himself couldn’t make too great a fuss with him.

He informed them that his name was Lupton—Herbert Lupton, and that he had never been able to wean himself from his favorite pursuit, racing. He was a good-looking man of about eight and thirty, but both the ladies thought he looked fast, and as if he drank more than was good for him. He was well dressed, but in rather a flashy style, and when Mr. Gunning told him at breakfast that he was to consider the house his home, whenever he liked to make it so, both the ladies looked at each other a little uneasily.

For some reason they had taken a dislike already to their “benefactor.”

After breakfast the gentlemen went out into the grounds for a cigar, and then Mr. Gunning at once proceeded to business.

“Now, Mr. Lupton,” he said. You must be candid with me. I owe you £95—because you only meant to give me five—that I shall hand you at once, but if there is any other way in which I can be of service to you, you must let me know. I feel as if you have a right to share in my prosperity. I’m a plain blunt man—but—er—in short, you helped me once. Can I help you now?”

Mr. Herbert Lupton gave his host a searching glance.

“Well, it’s very good of you,” he said, “but, as you put it so straight I don’t mind confessing that things haven’t gone well with me of late, and—er, I’ve had a thundering bad time racing. If you would lend me, not give me, because I couldn’t accept it, but if you could lend me £500——”



“Not another word, sir,” exclaimed Ebenezer. “Come into my library, and I’ll give you a check now.”

“I shall pay you back——”

“If you don’t I can’t help it. If you don’t I am still your debtor. But for you I should still be a waiter, and perhaps a very hard up one, perhaps a waiter out of place. Ebenezer Gunning, sir, is not ungrateful.”

A quarter of an hour later Mr. Gunning’s check for £500 was in Mr. Lupton’s pocket.

“And now, my dear sir, you’ll stay with us at any rate for a few days. Let me send to your hotel for your things.”

“Very sorry—I must get up to town to-day, but I’ll come and see you again. I’ll just say good-bye to the ladies, for I must catch the 12 o’clock train.”

Finding his persuasions useless, Mr. Gunning was obliged to give in. The adieux were duly spoken, and then Mr. Gunning escorted his guest to the door, where Mr. Gunning’s brougham was waiting to drive him to the station.

As they were saying good-bye for the last time through the carriage window, Mr. Lupton said casually: “By the bye, how long did you keep that £100 I gave you; you had to change it at last.”

“Change it!” exclaimed Ebenezer. “I’ve never changed it, sir, and I never will. It’s my luck. I’ve got it now, and when I die I shall leave it to my daughter as a heirloom. Where do you think it is?”

“I’m sure I can’t guess,” said Mr. Lupton smiling.

“Why where it was first put, my boy. It’s still sewn up in the missus’s stays. When she couldn’t wear the pair it was fust put in any longer, owing to her getting stout and the stays getting old she put the note in her new pair, and she is wearing your £100 sewn up in her stays now. Ha, ha, ha!”

The departing benefactor laughed as pleasantly and as



heartily as Ebenezer Gunning. "Ha, ha, ha! my note sewn up in her stays! Capital idea! Good-bye. See you again soon."

The coachman whipped up the horse and the benefactor was gone.

He didn't go straight to the station. He put his head out of the window and told the coachman to stop at the Bank. There he cashed Mr. Gunning's check, and then left by the midday train for town.

At one o'clock that day Mr. Gunning was pottering about his front garden, when his friend, Superintendent Jones came in.

"Hullo, Jones, how are you? Meeting went off quietly last night, didn't it?"

"Yes; but I haven't come to talk about that. I want you to tell me how, in the name of all that's extraordinary, Flash Jarvis got your brougham to drive him to the station to-day?"

"Flash who?" exclaimed Ebenezer, thinking he couldn't have heard what the Superintendent said.

"Flash Jarvis. Your man told me 'the gentleman' had been here all night, and that you put him in the brougham yourself."

"The gentleman who was my guest was a Mr. Lupton," exclaimed Ebenezer. "It's the most extraordinary thing in the world. Imagine, my dear fellow, he was the very man who, fifteen years ago, gave me the £100 note that made my fortune and founded Gunning's luck."

It was the Superintendent's turn to be astonished. He made Mr. Gunning tell him the whole story.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, when Ebenezer had finished. "Do you know that the man who got out of your brougham is one of the most notorious characters on a racecourse, and has been for the last seventeen or eighteen years. Why he's been in prison half a dozen



times, and he gave you the £100 note you're always talking about. I can't believe it."

"Well, he did, and I've got the note to prove it."

"Where is it?"

"Sewn up in the missus's stays."

"I'll believe it when I see it," said the Superintendent.

"Then you shall. I must have this cleared up at once."

Five minutes later Mrs. Gunning retired to her room, and presently Ebenezer came downstairs in triumph with a note in his hand.

"There," he exclaimed, flinging it on the table.

The Superintendent picked it up and looked at it, then burst into a roar of laughter.

"I thought so," he exclaimed. "Why, look at it, man. Look at it carefully. Your good wife has kept sewn up in her stays, for the last fifteen years, a note for £100 on the Bank of Elegance!"

. . . . .

It was true.

The foundation of the vast fortune of Ebenezer Gunning, Esquire, was a flash racecourse note, such as welshers and racecourse cheats carry about with them to cheat the greenhorns. His wife had folded it up and put it in her stays the night Ebenezer handed it to her. It had been removed as a precious heirloom, folded up, and placed carefully away in each succeeding pair of stays she had worn, and this was the first time it had been actually examined.

It is probable that the men who were pursuing "Mr. Lupton" on the night Mr. Gunning rescued him were men whom he had swindled on the racecourse, and who had recognized him in the town. He had slipped one of the folded flash notes into the unsuspecting waiter's hand to secure his assistance, and the waiter, overpowered with astonishment at the sight of "one hundred pounds"



had not looked carefully enough into it then to detect the fraud, and since that eventful night his wife had guarded it secure from observation in her stays.

Before the Superintendent left, Ebenezer made him solemnly promise never to betray the secret he had discovered to a living soul, and the Superintendent kept his word.

To-day no one else in Marshton knows that "Gunning's luck" was due to a Bank of Elegance note, not worth a farthing, or that it was on this substantial basis that he built up the large fortune which to-day he enjoys.

But it is noticed that Ebenezer Gunning, Esq., though he still proclaims himself a self-made man, has not for a long time past referred to the hundred pounds note which built up his credit, and was the stepping-stone to his fortune.

And Mrs. Gunning, whom he is loth to undeceive, still keeps the Bank of Elegance note carefully sewn up in her stays, because it is the sacred talisman which worked the change in her husband's prospects.

Which shows that the reputation of having money is sometimes quite as useful as the actual possession of it. The foundation of many a vast fortune is quite as shadowy and unreal as that upon which was built up the now solid edifice of "Gunning's luck."



## “PA.”

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WHEN the wealthy Miss Tomkins made such a bad match and married that scapegrace, William Jones Laurence, junior, all her friends prophesied that it would turn out badly. William was a good-looking, harum-scarum young fellow of six-and-twenty, who spent his days dressed to death as a swell clerk on the Stock Exchange, and his evenings (before he became so violently enamored of Gertrude Tomkins) in music halls and other dreadful places.

William Laurence was dreadfully “fast,” and he was in with a fast set. In the intervals of his laborious duties “in the House,” he was generally to be found lolling over one of the bars in the neighborhood of Throgmorton Street, chaffing the barmaids and smoking unlimited cigarettes.

Occasionally, to vary the programme, he would toss a friend for sovereigns, make one at a game of nap in a quiet office whenever the “Governor” was out of town, or assist in some of the many practical jokes with which the light-hearted young gentlemen of the Stock Exchange beguile the weary hours, when business is quiet and things are dull.

In the evening, dressed in faultless evening garb, with a beautiful flower in his exquisitely fitting overcoat, he



was generally to be seen at the Alhambra or the Pavilion (it was in the days before "The Empire" burst upon a wondering world as a Palace of Varieties with "Two lovely black eyes," "What cheer, Ria," a ballet and recitations from Lord Tennyson's poems, and Dr. Watts' hymns included in its bill of fare) or the Aquarium.

His salary being a small one, and his allowance from his papa by no means a large one, Mr. William Jones Laurence naturally had some difficulty in making his income equal to the demands of his decidedly lavish expenditure. The difficulty was got over with the assistance of one or two obliging gentlemen who discounted little bills for him. There was a nice kind tailor who didn't do this sort of thing himself, but who could "get it done," and who would take young Laurence's bill for £50 at three months and hand him £35 for it, at the same time deducting a tenner on account of his own overdue account. Then there was a solicitor's clerk who was very useful to him, and whose acquaintance he had made in a remarkable way.

One day this clerk called at the office and handed him a writ for £50. Mr. William Jones Laurence, who was always of a gay and cheerful turn of mind, took the writ, laughed, and invited the said clerk to come out and have a drink on the strength of it.

Said clerk being nothing loth they had a pint bottle of fizz at the Palmerston, and Mr. William Jones Laurence confided to the emissary of the law his little financial difficulties, and so won him over by his candor and *bon-homie* that the clerk undertook to finance him a little himself "for a consideration."

The secret of the ease with which the young gentleman "financed" himself in this free and easy way is soon told. Mr. William Jones Laurence, senior, was supposed to be a man of wealth and position in the city, and William, junior, was the only son. It was a case of



advancing the junior money which there was every reason to believe the senior would eventually pay.

The senior did pay eventually when with all young William's cleverness he found it impossible to renew any longer or to meet his engagements, the interest on renewals added in some cases to the original bills having run an original loan of about £200 up to something like £800.

As we live in an age when everything that has to do with finance is interesting, when financial papers come out every day, and are eagerly purchased by all classes, and the race for wealth is so fierce that the wits of the competitors are preternaturally sharp, a slight sketch of young Mr. Laurence's financial methods may not be uninteresting.

I will take one transaction as a specimen. He honored two tailors with his patronage; one was Mr. Brown, of Holborn, the other was Mr. Smith, of Moorgate Street.

He borrowed £25 of Brown, and gave a bill at three months for it. When the bill became due he hadn't any spare cash, so he discounted a bill for £50 with Smith, paid Brown, and pocketed the difference, about £10. When the £50 bill became due he discounted a bill for £75 with Brown and paid Smith. When that became due he discounted a bill for £100 with Smith and paid Brown.

If you work out this arrangement in figures, and calculate the interest paid at about 80 per cent. (it was often more), you will have no difficulty in understanding how, in about two years, the system broke down, and Mr. William Jones Laurence, junior, found himself in a "devil of a mess," and had to make a clean breast of his financial position to his worthy parent.

Mr. William Laurence, senior, was in those days a prosperous man of business. His trade was an old-fashioned one, and by no means congenial to his son, who had swell notions. It was because of these swell notions that he got a berth with a stockbroker instead of in his father's office.



Mr. Laurence, senior, gave his son a severe talking to, and paid his debts, and the next day young William, being once more financially sound, borrowed another £25 of his tailor, "just to go on with."

But that was his last escapade. One night at an evening party he met the fair and charming Miss Gertrude Tomkins, eldest daughter and sole heiress of Wilkins Tomkins, Esq., of Clapham, retired tallow merchant, and fell violently in love with her.

He didn't, of course, confess his love straight off after the first quadrille, but went home and dreamt about her, and the next day at the office made a series of mistakes, which would have procured him the "sack" there and then if his employer hadn't been his father's friend.

After that he sought invitations wherever he imagined he was likely to meet Miss Tomkins; he made desperate efforts to be nice and polite to Wilkins Tomkins, Esq., her father, and at last he succeeded in getting his sister to strike up a friendship with Miss Tomkins, and so in the course of a few months the two families became on very intimate terms, and young William saw a great deal of his black-eyed Susan. Her name wasn't Susan, but Gertrude, and her eyes were blue, but that doesn't matter—the poetic license is quite permissible.

Now that he was in love, William Laurence was a very different person to the Willie Laurence of old. No more barmaid flirtations in the city, no more evenings at the Alhambra and the Pavilion. No more tossing for sovereigns, and no more little bills at 80 per cent.

William was going to be worthy his adored one. He was going to make a name for himself in the city, for was he not determined to enter for the matrimonial stakes? and to enter for any stakes, with a hope of carrying them off, you must put yourself in strict training.

The course of their true love ran smoothly enough as



far as the young lady was concerned. She blushing confessed, when pressed upon the point by Will's sister, that Will was "very nice." Thus encouraged, William ventured, when an excellent opportunity occurred, to tell Miss Tomkins that he loved her, that he could not live without her, and that if she would only give him permission to tell her papa what he had told her she would make him the happiest man in Queen Victoria's realms.

Gertrude blushed and consented, and eventually Wilkins Tomkins, Esq., and William Jones Laurence, Esq., senior, had a little business conversation, and the result was that the young people were informed that they might consider themselves engaged.

Which they did.

Twelve months afterwards Mr. William Jones Laurence, junior, having, with the assistance of his parent, purchased a junior partnership in the firm of stockbrokers with whom he had gained his experience as a clerk, led to the hymeneal altar Miss Gertrude Tomkins, only daughter and sole heiress of Wilkins Tomkins, Esquire.

And they were happy.

Very, very happy for two or three years, and William Laurence, junior, got on and prospered, and became serious as he became substantial, and settled down into quite a model of propriety and respectability, being much looked up to, and growing just a wee bit proud and pompous.

And now there happened one of those peculiar "topsy-turveydoms" (I coin the word, because the current one does not for the moment occur to me) with which the student of contemporary men and women is continually being brought face to face.

In proportion as William Jones Laurence, junior, Esquire, went up in the scale of respectability, Mr. William Jones Laurence, senior, slid down it.

The staid, sober city merchant, at the mature age of sixty, suddenly commenced to sow his wild oats. He



began at sixty just where his son had left off at twenty-five.

Rumors had reached William Laurence, junior, from time to time, from his relations that "Pa" was doing strange things, but William had put a good deal of it down to exaggeration.

But one day when he went into a bar in Throgmorton Street, to see if one of his clerks was there, and found his respected parent actually taking a pint of champagne in the morning *and chaffing the barmaid*, repeating, as it were, the follies of his own youth, in the very place and on the very spot where he had been foolish, he was so dumfounded for a moment that he couldn't speak.

When he had recovered sufficient breath to articulate, he exclaimed "Hulloh, Governor, wha—what the deuce are you doing here?"

The old gentleman didn't seem a bit taken aback, but, lighting a cigarette, replied: "Business, my boy, business. How are you?"

It was a shock to William Laurence, junior, a great shock. He didn't like the idea of his parent—a man bearing the same name as himself, and known to a great many of his business acquaintances, drinking champagne before lunch and chaffing barmaids. And moreover it was just the sort of thing that Mr. Laurence, senior, had always set his face against in the past. How many times had he lectured his son upon the impropriety of such proceedings, and assured him that a young man who did that sort of thing would never come to a good end.

"What sort of an end will an old man who does that sort of thing come to?" said the young man to himself, and he returned to his office bewildered and wondering.

About a fortnight afterwards he had a further shock.

One of his clients, a young fellow who did a bit of gambling on the Stock Exchange, came to his office one afternoon, and after a little business conversation ex-



claimed: "Oh, I say, Laurence, I forgot to tell you. I met your father last night."

"Did you?" said Laurence, "where?"

The client laughed.

"At the Alhambra!"

"What!" exclaimed William, "my—governor—at the Alhambra."

"Yes, and the old boy was enjoying himself, and no mistake. He'd got his hat well on one side, a big cigar in his mouth, a flower in his buttonhole, and he was going it."

William Laurence, junior, didn't say anything. He simply sat down in a chair and stared open-mouthed at his informant.

It was true, then, the stories that reached him—just as he was becoming a sober citizen, and supporter of churches and missions, and a patron of the various movements for the elevation of the young men of the present day, his venerated and venerable parent was bursting out into a full-blown man about town.

That evening he and his wife dined with Wilkins Tomkins, Esq., his father-in-law. After dinner, when the two gentlemen were left alone over their wine, Mr. Tomkins put on a grave face and said solemnly, "William, there is a subject upon which I wish to speak to you."

"Certainly, sir," replied William, wondering what was coming.

"The fact is, William, I am not quite satisfied with the way you are going on!"

"Indeed, sir!" exclaimed William, very much astonished. "May I ask what I have done to cause you a moment's uneasiness?"

"You may. Of course, I can have no control over your actions, but the happiness of my child is very dear to me, and I naturally am grieved when I find her husband mixing in circles where a respectable married man of business is decidedly out of place."



"I fail to understand you, sir."

"Then I will be plain, William. Do you think that you ought to allow it to be publicly known that you attended a ball given by the members of the Lah-di-dah Club to the ladies of the Frivolity Theatre?"

William opened his eyes in astonishment.

"My dear sir," he exclaimed, "I assure you that you are mistaken. I have not since my marriage been to any ball except with my wife."

"Then a most unwarrantable use has been made of your name," said Mr. Tomkins, drawing a piece of newspaper from his pocket. "Read this, William," he said, handing the cutting over to the young man. "I cut it out of a sporting paper which was shown to me by a friend who was struck by your name."

Young William Laurence took the piece of paper and read it. "Among the gentlemen who footed it merrily with the charming young ladies of the Frivolity until the 'gunpowder ran out of their boots,' we noticed the Hon. Tom Noddy, Lord Waterloo, better known as 'Uncle Trot,' Captain 'Pop' Penarth, and a large contingent of city mashers, among whom were 'Colonel' Gus Cohen, Mr. Hughie Logan (the Mincing Lane masher), Mr. William Jones Laurence, etc., etc., etc."

"Now, William," said Mr. Wilkins Tomkins, as his son-in-law finished the paragraph, "you can understand my dismay at seeing you in such company?"

"But, my dear sir," gasped William, "I wasn't there, I assure you I wasn't. It must be another William Jones Laurence."

"Nonsense, my boy, there isn't another Jones Laurence in the directory except your father."

William sat bolt upright in his chair.

Except his father! Good heavens above! Of course—it must have been his father.

"That's it—it must have been the governor!"



“What, William?” cried Mr. Tomkins, “do you wish me to believe that your father would—absurd!”

“It—er—must have been,” stammered William. “I’m—er—afraid the governor is going in for this sort of thing, from what I’ve heard lately. At anyrate *I* wasn’t there, so please let us say no more about it.”

That evening, as William drove home with his wife, he gave vent to his feelings. “My dear,” he said, “I am getting very uneasy about my respected parent. We are both William Jones Laurences, and now that he has taken to figuring in fast society it is very awkward for me. Every time his name is mentioned people will think I am the William Jones Laurence referred to. I must do something.”

“What *can* you do, dear?” replied his wife, who was a sensible little woman. “Your father is old enough to take care of himself, and you have no power over him. You can’t forbid him to go to fast parties, or to toss for sovereigns, or to talk to barmaids, and you can’t insert an advertisement to say that the William Jones Laurence who does these things is not you, but your papa.”

William could only groan. He saw the force of his wife’s arguments, but he wondered where it was going to end. It was very unpleasant for a young man who had thoroughly reformed, and who was a shining light in chapel circles, to have his name mixed up with affairs of which he thoroughly disapproved, and it was equally painful for him to say, “Oh, dear, no, it wasn’t I—it was my father.”

But worse trials were to come for the good young man. One day he received a letter from his eldest sister which made him break out into cold perspirations.

“DEAR WILLIE. What do you think Pa has done now. He has gone in for horse-racing. We have the ‘Sporting Life’ and the ‘Sportsman’ left at the house every morning, and all day long telegrams keep coming, which I



open, thinking they may be about family matters. They are all this sort of thing : 'You are on Opossum a hundred S.P.,' 'Have put you fifty on Artichoke,' 'It is good business,' or 'Tadpole for the first race. Go nap.' Isn't it dreadful. Whatever can we do?"

William groaned. His respected parent had taken to backing horses. "Good heavens," he muttered to himself, "he'll attend race meetings next, and get known as the Jubilee Plunger, or something equally dreadful. I think I must mention it to the Rev. Mr. Badchand, and ask his advice."

The Rev. Mr. Badchand, the minister of the chapel William attended and supported with liberal donations, listened to William's tale, but couldn't suggest anything better than sending the old gentleman a few tracts.

"He won't read them," groaned William.

"We must pray for him, then."

"Yes, but you can't get up in the pulpit and say, 'The prayers of this congregation are desired for an old gentleman who backs horses.'"

"True," replied Mr. Badchand. "It would look as though we were praying that the horses might win. If I were you, I would go and remonstrate with him."

William thought that he would, and the following evening he went to his father's house after dinner, and after a few words with his sister went down into the smoking-room, where the old gentleman was smoking big cigars, and drinking soda and brandies with three or four other gentlemen.

"Halloh, Willie," said the old gentleman, "who would have thought of seeing you. Let me introduce you. Gentlemen, my son. William, this is Captain 'Nobby' Smith, of whom you may have heard—one of the 'flyest' men on the turf. This (pointing to another gentleman, with a shaven face and close-cropped red hair) is Mr. Joseph Potts, better known as Ginger Potts



—never defeated in the magic circle, my boy. I'm finding the money for a novice of his, and we've made a match for him with Posh Jarvis, of Bethnal Green, £200 a side, best of 12 rounds. You must come, Willie. It will be a rare good fight."

Young William rolled his eyes up to the ceiling. His father was actually entertaining a racing man and a fighting man under his own roof. He would be bringing off glove competitions in his own drawing-room on Sunday evenings next.

"My dear Governor," he stammered, "I—er didn't know you had company. I wanted a few words with you. I—er—I'll come again another time."

"All right, Will ; always glad to see you. By-the-bye, if you aren't engaged next Thursday I can give you a seat on our coach. We're going to drive to the races. Only a small party—these gentlemen, myself, and one or two of the young ladies from the Frivolity."

William checked the cry of righteous horror that rose to his lips. He darted upstairs into the hall, seized his hat, and fled.

The next day he called on the family solicitor. Yes, the family solicitor had heard about his parent's break out. "I don't think anything can be done to stop him," said the F. S. "You see he was very strictly brought up. He led a very quiet, hard-working life till he was sixty, and now he's having his fling. Men always sow their wild oats—when they're young or when they're old. You sowed yours young, your governor's sowing his now."

This was poor consolation, so William went to the family doctor. The doctor knew what was going on. He had known cases like it before. Still the old gentleman was strong, had a fine constitution, and a head that could stand any amount of whiskey and water. The chances were he would have his fling, and then settle down again.



Have his fling !

"It's awful !" groaned William. "Fancy a man of thirty having to look on calmly while his father 'has his fling.'"

Mr. William Jones Laurence, junior, was really worried about his father's extraordinary freaks. It was desperately annoying to him to be constantly told by men on the Stock Exchange that they'd seen his father at the races drinking champagne with the great Swagg, the Music Hall comedian, or picnicing on a drag with the Sisters Screamer, but the climax was reached when, among the noble lords and sporting gentlemen arrested for assisting at a prize fight "in the country," there appeared the name of Mr. William Jones Laurence.

The way in which William, junior, discovered his unhappy parent's latest defiance of social decorum was highly dramatic. He lived in the part of the country where the prize fight took place, and he had been made a J. P. It was his first appearance on the Bench when a crowd of "swells" and fighting men, arrested in the district at a prize fight, were brought before the local magistrates.

Glancing at the oddly assorted mob, William with a cry of horror, recognized his father among the prisoners.

"Gentlemen," he said, to his brother magistrates, "I cannot sit on the Bench while this case is heard."

"Why not, Mr. Laurence?" said the chairman.

"Because, gentlemen, one of the prisoners is my father."

Then he rose and left the bench, and went out to get some fresh air.

. . . . .

As soon as the case was over, and the prisoners, who were only spectators, had been discharged with a caution, young William took his father home and talked to him seriously. He talked so eloquently that the old gen-



tleman was deeply moved, and said that he saw the error of his ways. He gave his son his solemn promise that he would never back a horse or go to a prize fight again, and, being further pressed, he also agreed to give up tossing for sovereigns and chaffing barmaids.

Six months afterwards a complete change had come over Mr. William Jones Laurence, senior, and William, junior, was rejoicing heartily when he received a telegram from his sister :

“Come at once. Pa has joined the salvation army.”

William, junior, rushed up to town, but it was too late. His parent had attended a meeting at the Regent Hall, and had been so struck by an address of General Booth's that he had joined the army there and then.

To-day he is Captain Hallelujah Jones Laurence, and plays an enormous trumpet, woefully out of tune. Sometimes on Sunday afternoon, when Mr. Laurence, junior, is residing in town, he meets his father in full uniform, marching at the head of a company of salvation soldiers and hallelujah lasses, all yelling at the top of their voices.

And the young fellows of the Stock Exchange come to him and say, “Oh, I say, Laurence, I saw your father last night. He said he was ‘beautifully saved,’ and he was standing at the corner of Piccadilly Circus, banging his trumpet about the head of a cabman who'd put his foot through the big drum.”

And William Jones Laurence, junior, groans once more, and wonders which is the lesser evil—to have a pa who backs horses and tosses for sovereigns, or a pa who plays the trumpet in the salvation army.

He wanted his pa to be reformed and be saved, but he thinks now that he would have been satisfied with something short of such extremely public salvation as must necessarily accompany General Booth's uniform, and a blood and fire flag, and a big trumpet which the old gentleman “blows” with that tremendous amount of energy



which in the army is supposed to atone for a complete lack of skill.

The last time William, junior, met his parent it was in the street. The old gentleman was clapping his hands and dancing as he led the chorus of a salvation hymn to the tune of "We won't go home till morning."

As the senior caught the junior's eye, he stopped and exclaimed, in a loud voice, "Well, William, my dear son, I hope you are satisfied with your father *now*."

Religious and respectable as Mr. William Jones Lawrence, junior, is, he was compelled to confess to himself, as he went red-cheeked upon his way, that he was *not*. No power on earth will ever reconcile him to the uniform and the trumpet.



## FOR A MAN'S LIFE.

"WHAT do you think of him, Gertie?" said a handsome young fellow, with a decidedly military cut about him, as he stood with a remarkably pretty girl in front of a racehorse, who had just been stripped of his clothing preparatory to being sent to the post.

"He looks lovely," replied the girl.

"I should think he does," said the trainer, who was putting the finishing touches to the noble animal's toilet. "He's never been better than he is to-day since I've had him. He's fit to run for a man's life!"

Captain Lambourne laughed, and with a parting pat on the neck of his gallant racer, "Drum Major," he turned to his fair companion and suggested that he had better escort her to her seat in the members' enclosure now, as he wanted to say a few words to Drum Major's rider before the horses went down to the post.

As Captain Lambourne and his cousin, Gertie Holmes, made their way across the paddock, a tall young man with a pair of piercing black eyes, and a face whose peculiar pallor was made more noticeable by the almost raven blackness of his hair, moustache, and eyebrows, looked after them.

"Fit to run for a man's life!" he muttered hoarsely to himself. "I wonder what they would think if they knew that he is running for mine!"

. . . . .

The scene was Kempton Park, and the occasion was the first of December meeting. It was an admirable day



for steeple-chasing. The ground was, if anything, a little too much on the soft side, but that was all. The atmosphere was clear and bright, and the spectators would be able to see the racing from start to finish.

The great race of the day was not a particularly valuable one, but several first-class steeple-chasers had entered, and the field promised to be large. The betting had opened at two to one on the field, but after a little preliminary skirmishing between backers and layers it had settled down as the horses cantered past the stands on their way to the post, with 6 to 4 against Bonnie Scotland, 2 to 1 The Proctor, 5 to 1 Drum Major, 8 to 1 Catamaran, and from 10 to 1 to 100 to 8 the others.

Drum Major was the property of Captain Lambourne, familiarly known as Hughie among his friends, and was to be ridden by a popular gentleman jockey. The Captain had a modest pony on at 5 to 1. He was not a gambler, keeping only a small stud, and racing for the love of sport. Gertie Holmes, who was one day to be Mrs. Lambourne, stood in this leviathan bet to the extent of one sovereign, which it is needless to say was not "ready," and would not be too anxiously enquired for on settling day if Drum Major had the misfortune to be beaten.

The tall, dark young man who had uttered the extraordinary soliloquy about the horse running for a man's life, did not leave the paddock until the horses had passed through the gate. He waited and watched Drum Major. He tried to catch the few words that the trainer said to the acquaintance who came up and spoke to him, but the trainer was not very communicative, and what he did say didn't amount to much, only that he thought he had a good chance, but he was afraid of the favorite, Bonnie Scotland.

"How does the Major jump?" the young fellow heard one man say.

"Like a cat," was the trainer's reply, which to anyone versed in racing parlance was reassuring information.



Still the watcher's face wore an anxious look, and his under-lip trembled nervously.

Presently Captain Lambourne, having seen his fair cousin safely ensconced in a good position to view the race, returned to the paddock, and came up to his horse just as the jockey was mounting.

"Do you think you can beat the favorite this journey, Arthur?" he asked.

The rider nodded.

"It'll be a close thing between us," he said in a low voice. "Young Nightingale thinks he's got a real good thing. He's never been beaten on Bonnie Scotland yet, and the 'sharps' are putting their money down on him to a man, but with anything like luck I fancy I shall just do him, if the Major's improved as much as you say he has. What's his price now?"

"Six to one now," replied the Captain. "There's a lot of money come into the market just now for Catamaran, and that's made my horse a bit easy."

"Then look here, old fellow, you go and put £50 on the Major for me, and I'll have a pony on the favorite just to save myself. I'm certain that, bar a fall, there'll only be two of us in the finish."

The tall dark young man turned away. He had heard enough. Drum Major's rider evidently feared the favorite.

That had unnerved him a little, but the thing that upset him most was the "bar a fall."

A fall is a thing that has always to be reckoned with in steeplechasing. The best horse may go down, often through no fault of his own or its rider. Many a gallant steed who seemed to be coming in alone has come to grief even at the last hurdle. Many a favorite, with the money piled on him, as though defeat were an impossibility, has been brought down in a scrimmage before half the distance has been traversed.



Still the Major jumped like a cat—he was a horse who “stood up,” and his rider was one of the most confident and most experienced amateurs of the day.

After all, what did it matter. Only one horse can be the absolute winner. Lose to-day and win to-morrow—it's only the difference of paying or receiving on Monday.

Yes—in most cases.

But in this case Drum Major was running for a man's life.

Walter Gordon, the young man who had taken such an intense interest in all that concerned Captain Lambourne's horse, had committed the crowning act of madness of two long years of folly. At the age of three-and-twenty, owing to the death of an aged relative who had lived a miserly life and accumulated a fortune of £100,000, young Walter Gordon found himself in possession of £50,000, half of the estate being left to himself, and half to a young lady, a distant cousin of his. This is not a large sum, as fortunes run now-a-days; but to a young fellow who from the age of 18 had had to make his own way in the world, and live on the modest salary of a lawyer's clerk, it was wealth surpassing his wildest dreams.

Walter Gordon, at the time his fortune came to him, was a young fellow with neither father nor mother. He had married a sweet, good little girl who went to business, and continued to do so after their marriage, as between them they only just earned enough to pay the rent of their furnished rooms and the incidental expenses of domestic life.

Bessie Gordon was quite contented to go on working. She got home at six, which was half an hour before Walter returned, and that gave her time to make things comfortable and have a nice cosy tea waiting for him. The happy evenings they spent together fully compensated them for the labors of the day.



Sometimes they would stay at home and Walter would read aloud. Sometimes they would go out and see the shops, and now and then, when they had managed by strict economy to save a sovereign, they would buy some small ornament or article of furniture. Some day they hoped to have their own rooms, perhaps their own little house, and so they bought something towards "their little home" every time they had a little money put by.

And then suddenly, without a word of warning, fortune swooped down upon them, and Walter Gordon and his good little wife got up one fine morning to find themselves worth £50,000.

Walter could hardly believe the news at first, but as soon as he thoroughly realized the situation he seized Bessie round the waist and whirled her round and round their little sitting-room in a mad polka of excitement and joy.

The landlady rushed up to see what was the matter, for the whole house (a forty-five pound a year London house) rocked and swayed to a polka tune. Houses of this description are run up to be let, not to be danced in.

Walter informed the astonished landlady of what had happened, and gave her notice that they were going to leave. Then he rushed off to the office, handed in his resignation there, and drove to the lawyers who had his relative's business in hand, and received some money on account, and he and Bessie wound up the day of wild excitement by a lovely dinner at the Criterion and a box at the Alhambra.

Bessie was, of course, delighted at the good fortune which had befallen her young husband, but she was just a little bit anxious about the way it would affect him. Bessie, who had known the sting of poverty in her childhood, who had come home to find the brokers in her father's house, who had seen her mother, old and feeble, going round to old friends in a futile endeavor to borrow



the money to save herself and her daughter from being turned into the street for a loan-office debt contracted by her husband, was terribly afraid that Walter would be extravagant, and not take care of the money that had come to him so unexpectedly.

Walter, on the contrary, was fully convinced that he was made for life—that with £50,000 he could live the life of a Duke. He must have a house at once—a house in a good street, he must furnish it in the latest and the grandest style, he must buy Bessie diamonds, and he would have a horse and carriage.

The young man had no one to advise him except his good little wife, and what young fellow of three-and-twenty takes his wife's advice? And so he began by spending his capital instead of investing it and living on the interest.

Unfortunately, with the access of fortune, he developed the gambling instinct which was in him, and which had only been repressed by his lack of funds and his early marriage to a good and loving little girl. As soon as the securities had all been converted, and the hard cash was safely lodged in a bank to the account of Mr. Walter Gordon, that young gentleman turned his attention to sport, and became a regular attendant at race meetings.

Poor Bessie, who saw how things were going, was in despair. Over and over again she wished that they were back again in their two little rooms in Camden Town. Walter wasn't unkind. He gave her money, jewels, dresses—everything except himself. He was constantly away from home, and when he returned, late at night, he was jaded and weary with the excitement of the day.

The end of such a career was not difficult to see. It came, in about four years, to Walter Gordon. At the end of that time the whole of his money had been lost on the turf and at cards, and he was in debt. To meet his liabilities he stripped his home and sold his furniture, and he



and poor Bessie were once more in furnished apartments. The money had brought them only misery. Alas ! when poverty came again, it did not bring back the old happiness. Walter Gordon, like all gamblers, still believed he would retrieve his bad luck, and that Fortune would smile on him again.

Grown desperate as he saw the last of his money swallowed up in the vortex, he still wagered heavily. Poor Bessie gave up her jewels, and her husband sold them to get ready money, and at last he came to such a desperate strait that a horse was running for his life.

On the day that Walter Gordon stood in the paddock at Kempton Park and tried to hear all he could about Drum Major, he had brought himself to the pass that unless he could leave the race-course with the knowledge that on the following Monday he would have £500 to receive, he was a ruined man, a degraded and dishonored man, and he would either have to fly the country, or wait till the law laid violent hands upon him and dragged him away to a prison cell.

There was no more wretched man in all England that day than Walter Gordon. The thought of poor Bessie maddened him. Do what he would, he could not shut out the thought of the misery he had brought upon her as well as upon himself. Her faithful, loving little heart had long been well-nigh broken, and yet she had hidden her sorrow and anguish, and bravely tried to cheer her husband towards a brave endeavor to start a working life anew.

But the instinct of the gambler had triumphed over the instinct of the husband, and when all his money was gone, to find the means of having one more bout with fortune, the misguided young man had descended to a criminal act. He had been in the habit of receiving checks at one time from the solicitors who were realizing the assets of his dead relative. Those checks, before he



had a banking account, he had obtained money for from a man with whom he did business in the city.

To this man he had now gone in a desperate effort to raise money, with a check for £800, purporting to be drawn in his favor by the solicitors. He had told a round-about story—the check was post-dated the following Tuesday, as the money was not due till then—the solicitor had given him the check in advance, as the solicitor was going out of town—would Mr. — lend him five hundred on it, as he was temporarily short of money, and he would redeem the check on Tuesday. If he did not, Mr. — could pay it in.

The check was a forgery.

He had written the solicitors' names on one of his own checks—a check left over from the days of his banking account.

One wonders how men can be so mad as to do these things when detection stares them in the face, but a certain kind of gambler is beyond the arguments of reason or common-sense.

He believes that he will be able to put matters right. He is always going to win enough to square up with.

Walter Gordon believed that, during the week, with that £500, he would win enough to redeem the check and save it from being presented.

But all the week he had been unlucky, and now, with the desperation of a mad gambler, he had put the hundred he had left on Drum Major. He had been assured by a tipster with whom at one time he had done business, that it was a real good thing; that it was a "cert;" that it wouldn't be beaten; and he had gone to one of the big men in the ring and given him his £100 "ready."

The bookmaker knew Gordon in his plunging days, and knew him to be, in the language of the ring, "stony broke." He would not have bet with him "on the nod." Walter knew it, and so he staked his money.



"If I win," he said, "you can let me have a check on Monday. Don't pay me this afternoon, or I shall lose the lot, perhaps."

The bookmaker laughed. He knew that if he paid him or not, on the strength of his winnings, Gordon, like a genuine gambler, would go on and "play it up."

This was the position of affairs as Walter Gordon saw Drum Major go down to the post. He had made up his mind if Drum Major lost he would blow his brains out. He would never survive the shame and disgrace of being prosecuted for forgery.

Drum Major was fit to run for a man's life, and he was running for one.

The Stand was packed. Every face was turned towards the starting-point.

"They're off."

The horses came by the Stand for the first time, all going easy and well together. Drum Major jumped splendidly, so did Bonnie Scotland. The obstacles were cleared in faultless style. At the far jump two horses came to grief, and Bonnie Scotland and Drum Major went on well ahead, followed by Catamaran. Four hurdles from home, there were only four runners, the others had come to grief, the fourth horse being rapidly beaten off.

Bonnie Scotland and Drum Major were beginning to race together now, and Catamaran was coming along about ten lengths behind them.

"Bonnie Scotland wins!" yelled the spectators. "He doesn't. Drum Major a pony!" yelled another. Drum Major and Bonnie Scotland cleared the last hurdle but one, neck-and-neck. "Drum Major's done!" yelled the crowd as his jockey was seen to be flogging. The last hurdle was reached, and then there went up a wild yell. At the last hurdle Bonnie Scotland blundered and Drum Major, clearing the hurdle like a cat, came on for home. "100 to 1 on Drum Major," yelled the crowd, and Walter



Gordon, forgetting himself in the mad excitement, cried  
 "Thank God—thank God!"

And at that moment Catamaran, who had come up on the near side, suddenly shot ahead, and, as Drum Major was being eased, came with a tremendous rush, and caught him on the post.

Then arose a wild hubbub. "The Major's won."  
 "Catamaran's won!"

Then a breathless hush.

The numbers are going up!

Catamaran 1.

The judge had given the race to Catamaran by a short head!

. . . . .  
 "Oh, what a shame!" cried Gertie Holmes, as Captain Lambourne put his race-glasses down and gave a little grunt of dissatisfaction.

"What a beastly fluke," said the Captain, and then he added under his breath, "—— Catamaran!"

Walter Gordon, who had stood as if petrified when Catamaran came with that wild rush and caught the Major, gave one agonized glance at the numbers, waited a second, and then, buttoning up his racecoat, strode away from the course.

. . . . .  
 Walter Gordon strode away from the course, and wandered he knew not whither. He didn't go to the railway station; he didn't want to return to London. He wanted to get to some lonely spot and blow his brains out.

He had a loaded revolver in his pocket. He had carried it about with him for weeks past—ever since the idea of suicide had entered his brain.

He wandered out of Kempton Park into the high road, and kept tramping on. He wouldn't think of anybody or anything. He tried to shut out every idea save one,



and that one was, that before to-morrow's sun arose he must take his own life.

Presently he came to Hampton Court. He was hungry. It didn't matter, as he was going to die presently, but he had an idea that he should like to eat and drink first.

He went into one of the hotels, walked into the coffee-room which was empty, and had some cold meat and a cup of tea. Then he felt better and stronger, and taking a leaf out of his betting-book wrote only one little line on it, and addressed it to his wife. "God bless you, dear. It is all for the best. Walter."

Then he looked out of the window and saw that it was beginning to rain. A wet night in a country place is an abomination. He might just as well commit his suicide at once and have done with it.

He pulled his chair up by the fire and picked up a newspaper and sat reading until the traps began to drive up and some of the people returning from the races began to come in. He had come to grief over the second race and left early, which allowed time to walk to Hampton and be there long before the people who only left after the last race.

He didn't want to sit among a lot of people, so he rose, paid his bill and went out into the night. It was still raining.

He felt the pistol and took it out of his pocket. He was in a quiet part of the road—now was the time.

He raised the pistol, put the muzzle in his mouth, put his finger on the trigger, when he suddenly recollected that on leaving home that day his wife had given him a letter which had just come, and which he had put in his pocket unopened.

That letter saved his life.

He put the pistol in his pocket to open the letter and see what was in it. Striking a vesta, and shielding it from the wind, he read the letter.



It was from the solicitors whose name he had forged, informing him that the lady, a distant cousin of his, to whom the other half of the old man's fortune of £100,000 had been left, had died suddenly, and that, as she was unmarried, under the terms of the will the property would now come to him.

He had never dreamed of his cousin dying. His cousin was as young as he was, and he had supposed that she would marry and have children. He had never counted upon her inheritance falling to him.

And it was with a letter like that in his pocket he had gone through the agony of watching a horse run for his life, and had been upon the point of blowing his brains out.

. . . . .

None of that second £50,000 has gone on horse-racing. Walter Gordon has had enough of that to last him his lifetime. He has left the securities of his cousin's undisturbed, and he and Bessie live happily and contentedly on the interest. But he never hears people speak of a horse being fit to run for a man's life without thinking of the day when Drum Major ran for his, and very nearly lost it for him.



## “A PUT-UP JOB.”

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“SOME men has plenty money and no brains ; some men has plenty brains and no money.” I forget for the moment the immortal words of the British nobleman who “languished in gaol,” and who made Wapping famous in the annals of the Law Courts, but they were intended to convey the pleasing moral that it was the duty of penniless sharps to prey upon wealthy flats.

It is only fair to this former large and daily increasing class to say that they fully recognize the now proverbial philosophy of the Brobdignagian butcher, who was quoted for awhile as a B. of B. K., or Baronet of the British Kingdom, and endeavored to act up to it.

Never a day passes but some pretty little scheme is concocted by the sharp division for the purpose of easing the flat division of their superfluous cash, and some of these schemes are elaborated with a skill, and carried out with a finesse, which raise swindling to the dignity of a high art. Startling indeed are the stories current in certain circles of the dodges by which a few clever and unscrupulous adventurers have continued to annex portions of the spare capital of young men of fortune who “fancy” themselves as “noble sportsmen,” and who are generally the last persons to suspect how systematically they have been done.

Some of the biggest robberies which have been committed in this way are too intricate to be understood, save by those who are thoroughly well up in the details of those



national sports, such as racing and pigeon-shooting, which admit of heavy wagering.

One sweetly simple instance of a "put-up job" which had for its origin the despoiling of a wealthy young patrician, however, occurs to me, which a child could understand, and as it is a little drama of life—a comedy drama, or a farcical drama if you like, I shall make no apology for including it in these series.

When the Hon. Tom McRoysterer, by the death of his father, came into a fortune variously estimated from £100,000 to £200,000 a year, he was a young gentleman who had already given considerable promise of being a great acquisition to the ranks of modern Tom and Jerrydom. His chambers were already decorated with portraits of ballet ladies, race horses, and fighting men, and his command of low language was declared to be almost unique.

The money he had as soon as he attained his majority, and the fortune that was to come to him at the death of his father, soon secured him a crowd of admirers among a certain class, and as these people laughed at his assumption of the language and manners of a racecourse rough, and never failed to assure him that he was the "flyest" cove they ever met, it was small wonder that the Hon. Tom rapidly developed into a swaggering vulgar rowdy of the most pronounced type, and came at last to believe that, with his money to back him up, he could do as he chose, and outrage the conventionalities with impunity.

Apart from his fame in racing circles, he enjoyed a tremendous reputation as a patron of the prize ring, as the ring is now constituted. Many a hundred pounds of his did young gentlemen of the pugilistic persuasion playfully knock each other about with boxing gloves for, and he was eagerly run after by the promoters of boxing competitions, tournaments, etc.

The Hon. Tom had lots of money, a great deal more than he wanted, and as he was proud of being considered



a patron of the noble art, the noble artists didn't see why they shouldn't get a bit of it for themselves.

And so the Hon. Tom was gracefully "cut up" among them. For his benefit barney after barney was got up, matches were made for fabulous sums between real pugilists, and he was constantly being introduced to men whom it would be worth his while to find the stake money for. It is needless to say that in nine cases out of ten the Hon. Tom's money was divided between the winner and the loser and the select crew, which usually "stands in a bit" when "mug's money" is to be "touched."

The gentle reader must pardon me a certain slanginess of expression. It is inseparable from the subject, a subject which has given many words and expressions to the English language—words and expressions which are now classical.

In the halls of St. Stephen's itself during a debate on which hangs the fate of a ministry, you may hear such expressions as "hitting below the belt," "fighting with gloved hands," "throwing up the sponge," "failing to come up to time," "coming up smiling," "first blood," etc., etc., and all these expressions originated in the Prize Ring.

But of all the nice little schemes which were hatched by the fraternity to get money out of the Hon. Tom. Mc-Roysterer, the neatest and the best was that conceived and carried out by one man, William Burgess, commonly known as "Bill."

Bill Burgess was attached to the Hon. Tom's suit in a very humble capacity. He was simply one of half a dozen young fellows who could use their fists, and who, for a small consideration, accompanied him to race meetings, prize fights, and sundry places of fast resort in the West End and the East End, in order to take care of him should his bad behavior or his drunken insolence call down upon him the vengeance of an individual, or of the mob.



The technical name for these young fellows is "minders." A "minder" is a bully who accompanies "a swell," and sets about his aggressors, or protects him from aggression.

The head minder, who selected and "bossed" the gang, and whose orders they were expected to obey, was a middle-aged professional pugilist named "Ginger" Jones.

He was currently reported to be in receipt of a thousand a year from the Hon. Tom, and in addition to this whenever there was likely to be trouble, he received a fiver or a tenner with which he was supposed to hire "a mob" in the shape of five or six minor lights of the boxing fraternity.

Bill Burgess was one of the minor lights. He had won one or two small competitions at the East End, but he was very clever at street fighting, or "in a row;" and having given proof of the skill with which he could use his fists in a rough-and-tumble *mêlée*, he was favorably noticed by Ginger Jones, who added him to the Hon. Tom's little army of "minders."

Bill Burgess was five and twenty, and ambitious. He had a head as well as a couple of hands, and he was by no means satisfied with the position he had attained. His regular trade was bad, and he was convinced that he would never attain to anything like a position as a glove-fighter.

And without a position Mr. William Burgess didn't see that he was likely to do much good for himself by standing up to be knocked about for the edification of the mob. I have said that he was an ambitious young gentleman. There was a reason for his ambition. He had fallen desperately in love with a charming young lady who was a barmaid at the "Gentleman and Magpie," in the Whitechapel Road, and he seriously contemplated matrimony.



But the young lady not unnaturally objected that a husband who had to fight for his living, and was not particularly lucky in his contests, was not on the whole a husband that a girl could look up to with confidence.

Polly—her name was Polly—had been brought up in the public-house line all her life, and her great idea was to have a public house of her own some day by marrying the proprietor of one.

Poor Bill Burgess, who popped the question, being carried away by his feelings, with a fearful black eye, the result of a “fight to a finish” in which he had been engaged on the previous evening, confessed with a sigh that the chances of his ever having a public-house were exceedingly remote.

The money he received now and then for helping to “mind” the Hon. Tom. was only just enough to buy him the nice clothes in which he came courting Polly, and this sum was not very largely augmented by his professional gains at the East End, which usually consisted of the coppers which the spectators dropped into his hat when he went round and said, “Don’t forget the loser, gentleman, please.”

Polly confessed that she “liked” him, that if she saw a prospect of his getting on in life she would be quite willing to love him and marry him; but that, having been carefully brought up, and knowing the value of money and the extreme inconvenience that arises from a lack of it, she was fully determined not to risk an imprudent marriage.

Poor Bill Burgess, who had been badly beaten on the previous night, put his hand to his black eye, which was painful, and wiped away a tear.

Polly’s business-like little answer had dashed his hopes to the ground. He saw no earthly chance of ever winning what Polly would call “a good match.”

He went home that night in a melancholy frame of mind.



If he could only have developed champion form, and had the luck to get in with the "nobs," and fight for the £500 and the £1,000 stakes which were so readily provided for the pets of the Prize Ring, he would have a good chance of getting his public house, but Bill was wise enough to know that clever and quick and plucky as he was, he could never emerge from the second-class rank of "scrappers."

The only pal he had who was likely to give him a chance and get him on was Ginger Jones, and Ginger thought he'd done a real good thing for him when he took him on at a pound a time to make one of the Hon. Tom's "minders."

"Now, if I could do something for Mr. McRoysterer," thought Bill to himself, as he lay and tossed from side to side in bed, "he's free with his money, and he might do something for me. But he don't hardly know me by sight. He chucks his money about, but I don't get none of it. I wonder if he'd put up £500 for me to fight for if Ginger was to make him believe that I was a wonder? But I ain't a wonder, and it's 50 to 1 as they'd find a man to fight me as would make my chance of the coin a mighty small one."

The more Bill thought about his chance with pretty Polly, the more difficult it seemed to him to make it a good one, and he finally fell asleep fully persuaded that he was the most unhappy young man on the surface of the globe, and that Polly would never be Mrs. Burgess.

The next morning Bill received a message from Ginger Jones, telling him that he was to be at a certain place at seven o'clock the next evening on business. Bill kept the appointment, and found Ginger waiting for him.

"Do you want to make a tenner, Bill?" said Ginger.

Bill rather thought he did.

"Well, then, look here. The Hon. Tom's been on the



drink for the last week and he's nearly mad. He's going to-morrow night to Jack Smith's at Shoreditch to see the fight between the two novices, and there'll be one or two of the boys there who owe him one, and I expect they'll go for him. He expects so too, himself, but I've told him I'll take care of him and it'll be bad for anybody that starts on him. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," said Bill, "you want me to be one of your mob and fight if it comes to anything?"

"No, you ain't quite got it, Bill, yet, the price for that sort of thing ain't a tenner."

"Well, then, what *do* you want me to do?" said Bill.

"I'll tell you. It's just on the cards that the boys'll think better of it, and won't go for him. He's beginning to think already that he's so popular that he's quite safe alone, and that don't suit my book."

"Of course not," said Bill.

"Well, this is where your tenner comes in. I want you to get among the boys and tell 'em we're all sick of the Boss's goings-on, and we should like him to get a hiding, and if they go for him we won't interfere."

"Well, I'm blowed," exclaimed Bill, opening his one eye to its widest extent, (the other being black and swollen wouldn't open at all) "ain't that giving him away rather. Why, they'll murder him."

"No, they won't," said Ginger, "you aint half 'fly.' I shall have a good mob ready, and the moment the boys start we shall smother 'em. You see we want to give the Boss a show for his money. If we make him believe we've saved his life he'll come down handsome. It'll be worth £500 to me."

The word £500 had a magical effect on Bill's understanding. That was just the sum he had been dreaming about. It was the sum he had fixed as the price of Polly's hand, and the first start towards the public-house.

"When is it?" said Bill, after a moment's cogitation.



“To-morrow night.”

“And I’m to egg the boys on to go for the boss if they don’t make a move of their own accord?”

“Yes.”

“And I’m to have a tenner for the job.”

“Yes. Is it a bargain?”

“Yes,” replied Bill, “it’s a bargain. There’s my hand.”

“Only remember,” said Ginger, “it’s no fight, no money; you’ll have to earn the tenner.”

“I’ll earn it,” replied Bill, winking his one sound eye, “you can bet your bottom dollar on that.”

Bill had a glass with his patron, and then wished him good-night.

As soon as he got out into the street, he walked very slowly.

He was thinking. He had got half an idea in his head and he wanted to make it a whole one.

£500!

To make the Hon. Tom McRoysterer believe that he had been saved from a jolly good hiding would be worth £500 to Ginger Jones. Why shouldn’t it be worth £500 to Bill Burgess?”

Bill Burgess went straight to a man he knew, a rough and ready rowdy who was a well-known character in sporting circles, and whose room was generally more acceptable than his company. He had lately fallen on particularly bad times, and Bill knew that he would do pretty nearly anything for money.

The gentleman in question was easily found at one of his usual houses of call. Bill went into the bar and gave him the “office” to come outside. Mr. Joe Cully—that was the gentleman’s name—drank up at once and followed Bill Burgess into the street.

“Joe,” said Mr. Burgess, “would you like to earn a tenner?”



It is not necessary to reproduce the language in which Mr. Cully expressed his willingness to earn such a gorgeous amount of money.

"Very well, then, you shall, but before I tell you what you've got to do, you've got to take your oath you'll never mention the circumstances to a soul except your brother Sam?"

"What's Sam got to do with it?"

"He'll have to be with you on the job, and there's another tenner for him. Twenty pounds between you. Will you swear for yourself, and make Sam swear too?"

"Yes, I'll swear anything, and so'll Sam."

"Very good, and I know you'll keep your oath, for if you round on me I'll say what I know about the Camden Town job."

This was a delicate little hint concerning a fraud on a publican in which the amiable brothers were concerned, and of which they were not suspected by their victim or the police."

"You needn't make no threats, Bill," said Mr. Cully, "it won't pay either on us to round on you, and so we sha'n't. Now, then, what's the job, and where's the money?"

"Job first, Cully, and money afterwards—next morning. Honor bright!"

"All right—what have we got to do?"

"Not much. To-morrow evening I want you and your brother to wait at the top of the alley that leads to Jack Smith's place. You know the alley that the boys gets half-a-quid for seeing the swells safe through after a boxing match."

"I know—well."

"You and your brother are to wait there till you see the Hon. Tom McRoysterer get out of his cab, then you are to go straight up to him and hit him on the nose and say you'll do for him, and your brother's to come up and hit him in the stomach at the same time."



“Hard?”

“No! don’t hurt him—only frighten him, then I shall be passing and I shall set about you both and knock you down one after the other.”

“Well, I’m blowed!”

“You can go down easy so I shan’t have to hurt you—but I want you to swear you mean murder, and use the strongest language you know.”

“Well, of all the rum goes!” exclaimed Mr. Cully, you want us to knock your Boss about and you—” Suddenly Mr. Cully stopped short and burst into a violent fit of laughter. Mr. Burgess’s little plant had suddenly dawned upon him.

“Well, Bill,” he exclaimed, you’re a beauty, and no mistake. I see your game.”

“Never mind my game. Will you play your part of it.”

“Yes, but you ought to make it five and twenty between us.”

“Very well—five and twenty—that’s your share, but not a shilling more; so don’t try any bounce. Yes—or no?”

“Yes.”

Mr. Burgess gave his confederate a few more words of instruction, and then went home and went to bed and dreamed that he had married Polly and taken a public-house, and that he was doing such a roaring trade he had to get a policeman to come behind the bar and help to serve.

The next evening the Hon. Tom McRoysterer arrived to see the glove fight at Jack Smith’s. He dismissed his hansom at the top of the alley, and was turning to enter it when he received a blow on the nose.

Before he could put his hands up he received another in the stomach.



He had come from his private house, and all his "minders" were inside Jack Smith's waiting for him.

He was helpless, and was about to yell murder when a young fellow rushed forward and, fighting like a champion, knocked his two assailants into the gutter.

Then he seized the Hon. Tom by the arm and dragged him away. "This way, sir," he cried. "There's half-a-dozen of 'em inside waiting for you. It's a plant. If you go in there you'll be murdered. Your mob have been bought over, and the boys are going for you."

Mr. William Burgess took the Hon. Tom, who was far from sober, back to his chambers, where he bathed his nose and had some neat brandy for the pain in his stomach.

"By——, my lad, you've saved my life to-night, and I won't forget you," said the Hon. Tom, "but for you those wretches would have killed me. Call to-morrow morning, and I'll give you a check for £500. I'll start you in a public-house. By——, there's nothing I won't do for you."

"I only protected you, sir," said Bill, "and I don't want any reward."

It was very wrong of Bill Burgess to tell such a story, but what can you expect from a young fellow brought up as he had been. In his case it was a deliberate untruth, but had he been a statesman instead of a prizefighter it would have been called diplomacy.

He protested that in saving his patron he had only done his duty, and he modestly shook his head at the idea of being recompensed.

It was a noble sentiment and worthy of an Englishman.

But Bill Burgess came the next morning, and he received the £500, out of which the brothers Cully had £25, and the Hon. Tom kept his word, and is his best patron to this day. He started Bill in a public-house, and Bill married Polly, and is doing remarkably well.



Ginger Jones and Bill Burgess never speak as they pass by. Ginger knows that Bill sold him, but he can't say so to the Hon. Tom without confessing that he, Ginger, had arranged a nice little plot at Jack Smith's, of which the Hon. Tom was to be the victim.

I have altered the names of the parties to this little transaction for obvious reasons, but the story is absolutely true, and I still consider it one of the cleverest "put-up jobs" that has ever been brought off by a sharp for the benefit of a wealthy flat. That wealthy flat still considers himself "the flyest cove" in London.



## JIM CROWE'S SISTER.

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HER real name was Jemima Crowe, but she was called Jim Crowe by her friends and associates.

Jim was general servant to the Pargeters. The Pargeters were a respectable family who left the country to settle in London. Sam Pargeter when he married Susan Green was clerk to a country builder. He thought London was a place where he would be safe to "better" himself, and so when his only daughter, little Susan, was four years old the family came up to town. His wife had saved a little money—a very little—but enough to enable him to furnish a small house in the suburbs. The Pargeters occupied a portion of it, and the drawing-room floor they let off in apartments. Mrs. Pargeter was a good plain cook, but she couldn't do all the housework and attend to "the drawing room" as well, and so a general servant was advertised for, and Jemima Crowe applied for and obtained the situation.

From the first moment that Jemima came to them the Pargeters liked her. There was a blunt, straightforward honesty about her which delighted them, and she soon proved herself a faithful and attached servant. She knew London, and the Pargeters didn't. She was up to the ways of London tradespeople and the Pargeters weren't. She was a good judge of character, and could read a lodger up and down after one good look at him or her, and poor Mrs. Pargeter would have taken in a burglar in the blindest confidence if one had knocked at the door and applied for



the apartments, which were advertised by card in the window. All these things soon made Jemima Crowe something more than the Pargeters' general servant. She became their guide, their counsellor, and their friend.

When the drawing-rooms were vacant and a lady or gentleman applied, it was Jemima who conducted the negotiations. It was Jemima who showed the rooms, it was Jemima who expatiated upon the healthiness of the locality, the quietness of the house, and the respectability of the family, and it was Jemima who delicately hinted that references were required, and that the payment of a week's rent in advance was not itself a sufficient guarantee of a lodger's respectability.

When the apartments were let and the new lodgers installed, it was Jemima whose quick eye took in every detail, and reckoned them up, and settled off hand whether they were good lodgers to be studied and retained, or "worritting" lodgers to be diplomatically got rid of.

"I don't know whatever I should do without Jemima," Mrs. Pargeter would say to her husband, and though Mr. Pargeter knew, he was too kind a husband to give his wife the information. He was perfectly well aware that without Jemima there would be a chaos at Sudbury Villa, Holloway, and that the lodgers would either never pay their rent or leave, because they could not get properly attended to. Mrs. Pargeter was a good cook, a loving wife, a devoted mother, and as good-hearted a little woman as ever breathed, but she was no manager. She had one invariable custom when things got muddled or went wrong, and that was to sit down and cry. Jemima's plan was exactly the reverse. She tried her best to keep things from going wrong, but if they did, as they will do occasionally, even in the best regulated families, then she would stand up and laugh and bustle about, and get them right again as quickly as possible.

After Jemima had been with the Pargeters some two or



three years they felt that she was one of the family. She knew all Mr. Pargeter's little ways—it was she who got him off in the morning ; it was she who made him welcome when he came home at night. It was she who cheered the drooping spirits of Mrs. Pargeter when the little clouds gathered on the horizon of domestic management coupled with apartment letting, and it was she who tenderly nursed and cosseted little Susan through all her childish ailments, and won her heart and became her loving, sympathetic, and devoted “Jim.”

It was the child who first called Jemima “Jim.” It was “Tzim” when she was five and lisped a little ; it was “Jim” as she grew up. Jemima had told her little mistress one day that her brother who died used to call her “Jim,” and it took the child's fancy, and ever afterwards she called her dear kind nurse “Jim,” too.

It was “Jim” who took little Susan Pargeter to the day school ; it was “Jim” who fetched her home, and it was always “Jim” who heard her say her prayers and sat and talked to her till the little eyes closed and the little head sank down in sleep upon the pillow.

And oh ! the wonderful stories Jim would tell Susan—stories that made her big brown eyes open wide with awe and astonishment. But the story that interested little Susan most was the story of Jim's sister.

Jemima's sister lived far away in a very hot country, where the people were all black. I am giving you Jemima's story as she told it herself. She was married to a very rich dark gentleman in that hot country, and had hundreds of servants and a palace and jewels, and her name was Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy. Where she lived there were tigers and elephants and serpents, and her husband worshipped the Fire.

The little girl thought this quite as wonderful as a fairy tale, and she told her father and mother about it.

When Mr. Pargeter first heard the child's tale, he thought



it was some nonsense Jim had been telling her, but when little Susan turned to Jim and said, "It is true, Jim, dear, isn't it, about your sister's name being God Save the Queen and having a palace?" and Jim said "Yes, quite true." Mr. Pargeter was very much astonished, and asked Jim to kindly explain.

The explanation was simple enough, though it was quite a romance.

Jim Crowe's sister, who was two years older than Jim, was a very beautiful girl, and had been taken out to India when she was a little girl by a rich lady who was over here, for her to bring up her children. Jim's sister had been engaged as under-nurse while the lady was in England, and had so ingratiated herself with the children that they didn't want her to leave them, and so when the lady went back to India, and to her husband, who was a Government official in Bombay, little Annie Crowe was persuaded to go with them. She never came back again, but when the children grew up, and her services were no longer required, she became half-companion, half-maid to the lady. Her beauty attracted the attention of a rich Parsee merchant, who visited the family. He had one of those odd names which the Parsees, in latter times, have bestowed on their children. Some are called Ready Money, some Loyalty, some Liberty, etc., but Annie Crowe's admirer had an extra loyal front name, and it was God Save the Queen.

When he one day proposed to the pretty English girl, she was so confused and taken aback she didn't know what to say, but having neither father nor mother, and only a sister in England, she went to her best friend, her mistress, and told her all about it.

Annie's mistress was a woman of the world. She knew that the Parsee merchant was an honorable and a highly respected gentleman, and she felt that it was too good a chance in life for Annie to pass over, so she advised the



girl to let Mr. Jamsetjeebhoy pay his addresses, and then she would see if she could ever love him as a husband.

Six months afterwards they were married, and Jim assured her master that her sister had written to her since and told her they were very happy. They had been married six years when Jim came to the Pargeters, and Jim had two nieces and a nephew whom she had never seen.

“And so you are sister-in-law to Mr. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy, a merchant prince, and your sister has hundreds of servants, and lives in a palace, and you are a general servant in a little house in Holloway. It’s odd, Jim, very odd!” exclaimed Mr. Pargeter, as soon as he had thoroughly digested the story.

“It is odd, sir, and it used to seem odd to me at first, replied Jim, “but I’ve got used to it now. You see I was only twelve and Annie fourteen when she went away, and we’ve never seen each other since we’ve grown up, so perhaps it isn’t so wonderful as it otherwise would be for us to be in such different positions.”

“But hasn’t your sister done anything for you?” chimed in Mrs. Pargeter.

“Lor, mum,” said Jemima, “why should she? I’ve never wanted for anything. I’ve got money in the Savings Bank, and I’ve never been out of place but one week in ten years. After she was married she wrote to me and said would I come out, or could she send me anything. I wouldn’t go out, of course. I should feel odd in a palace, and sitting down to table with the quality, and being the missus’s sister I couldn’t well stop in the kitchen. As to her sending me anything, I’m independent, thank God, and I didn’t want my sister to send me any of her husband’s money. I’m very happy as I am, and as long as I’m happy I don’t envy the Queen on her throne.”

“I suppose you’ve heard from your sister since,” said Mr. Pargeter.



"Oh yes, sir. She always writes to me after every baby. When I get a letter I know there's another. You see so long as she's all right we haven't much to say to each other, for I don't suppose we should recognize each other if we met."

That night when the Pargeters were retiring to rest Mrs. Pargeter broached the subject of Jemima Crowe's sister.

"Fancy, my dear," she said to the husband, "our Jim being related to the nobility like that; why it's quite like one of those stories I used to read in the 'London Journal' when I was a girl."

"Strange things happen in life every day, Susan," replied Mr. Pargeter. "I hope no rich Indian will ever come along and take a fancy to our Jemima, and take her off and make her Mrs. Cheer Boys Cheer Bobrawala, or Mrs. Pop Goes the Weasel Chowchow Chunder Sen, or anything of that sort."

"Oh, Sam, how can you make a joke of such a thing?" exclaimed Susan Pargeter, the tears almost coming into her eyes. "I hope Jemima will never marry—whatever should we do without her."

. . . . .

Five years after Jim had revealed to her master and mistress the fact that her only sister was the wife of a wealthy Parsee in India, a great change took place in the fortunes of the Pargeters. Sam Pargeter was laid up with a severe attack of rheumatic fever, and was compelled to resign his employment. This, coupled with the fact that the drawing-room floor had left in debt, and that the apartments had been for some time vacant, brought the unhappy family who had come to London because "it was paved with gold" to the verge of very bad times, and the verge was passed, when some time later Mr. Pargeter, having been unable to meet a loan which he had contracted on a bill of sale in a fit of desperation, the broker's man came on a



visit to the Pargeters, and only left at the same time as the furniture.

The Pargeters were ruined—ruined as hundreds of people are every day in this great London. All their cherished household goods were swept away, and poor little Susan, now ten years old, came home from school one day to find her mother weeping in an empty room, and Jim, the tears flowing down her honest cheeks, vainly endeavoring to make Mr. Pargeter accept the sum of ten pounds which she had drawn out of the Savings Bank, “only till you can pay me back, sir, only till you can pay me back.”

Little Susan knew what had happened. She had heard her parents talk before now of the impending blow. “Oh, mother, mother!” she moaned, “have they taken all our beautiful things?”

In a moment Jim’s arms were round the little girl’s neck, and Susan buried her face and sobbed her heart out on Jim’s heaving bosom.

“Oh, my lamb, my little lamb!” wailed Jim. “I’ve got to leave you, I’ve got to leave you, and it breaks my heart to do it.”

This was the crowning blow. Mr. Pargeter, who was, though weak, just able to get about again, had determined to face his trouble. He would get employment again soon, he hoped, but it would take years to build a home up again. They would have to go into three rooms—three cheap rooms for a while, and they would not be able to keep a servant.

Poor Jim vowed that if they would only let her stay she would work for nothing, and she would have done it gladly; but even Jim, kind-hearted and self-sacrificing as she was, would have to eat and drink, and Mr. Pargeter knew that he would have all his remaining energy taxed to find food for his wife and child.

Besides, he was too honorable to allow Jim to sacrifice



herself. She was a good servant. There were plenty of people who would be glad to have her, and she had her own way to make in the world.

And so there came at last a painful parting. The last good-bye was said. Jim bore up bravely till she was at the door and her boxes on the top of the four-wheeler, and then as she caught her little mistress to her heart for the last time she broke down, and went red-eyed and sobbing into the cab.

And as she drove away and leaned her head out and waved her handkerchief, so that they might see her to the very last, the tears were in the eyes of husband and wife, who were losing a faithful friend, and little Susan, broken-hearted, crept up to an empty room and went down on her knees, and, burying her head in her hands, cried over the first great loss of her life—the loss of her dear, loving, motherly “Jim.”

Before she had left, Jim had put a letter in little Susan’s pocket. “Don’t you open that till after I’m gone, dear,” she said, and Susan had promised. In her grief she forgot all about the letter till she went to bed. Then she found it in her pocket. It was the ten pound note which Mr. Pargeter had refused—nearly all the savings of Jim’s lifetime.

And Jim had written on a sheet of paper, “If your papa sends it back, it will break my heart. Let me think I helped the dearest, kindest friends I ever had. Write to me sometimes, my lamb. A letter to my cousin, Mrs. Marsh, at Middleton, will be taken care of, and sent to me wherever I am, dear. God bless you. Your humble friend and servant, JIM.”

Years of struggle—years of heart-breaking rebuffs at fortune’s cruel hands—years of bitterness and humiliation passed over the heads of the Pargeters. Mr. Pargeter got better, obtained another situation, fell ill again and lost it.



Mrs. Pargeter, unable to bear trouble, fell into a shiftless, desponding state, and let things drift. The guardian spirit of the humble little home was Susan.

The child had grown into a sweet and gentle girl, and had taken the burthen of the home upon her young shoulders. She was bright, intelligent, patient and gentle, and she had the cleverest and deftest little fingers in the world. Those clever fingers were the family's salvation.

Susan had a natural aptitude for making dresses and bonnets and hats, and could do all manner of clever things with a pair of scissors and a needle, and at the age of seventeen she was able to go out and work at ladies' houses. She had an introduction to a customer first of all from a clergyman's wife, and that went a long way in the suburbs, where the clergy are the nearest approach to the aristocracy. Then one lady recommended her to another, and she was so clever, so well-behaved, and so gentle, the ladies said, that many of them became her friends.

Every day, in all winds and weathers, Susan Pargeter went to her work and returned at night, and then there was plenty for her to do at home. It was a hard working sunless life, but the girl was amply repaid by the intense love her father bore her, and in the knowledge that she was keeping a roof over her parents' heads and at least saving them from the worst side of poverty—the poverty that brings cold and hunger in its train.

Poor Mrs. Pargeter muddled on. She was still a good cook, but that was very little use when there was very little to be cooked. She was a good wife and nursed her husband, she was a good mother and loved her daughter, but she had not the first principle of household management, and she was always in a muddle. She muddled so effectually that in spite of her daughter's earning and a little she was able to make herself by needlework and a small sum which Mr. Pargeter obtained



by balancing little local shopkeepers' books at home, they were never ahead of the world.

Since Jim left them they had had to move three times. After the first move they had heard nothing of her. She had written to say she had obtained another place and Susan had written to her. When they moved Susan had written to the address at Middleton, but the letter had come back. Jim's cousin was dead and strangers were in her cottage. In this way the correspondence was broken, and Jim grew to be but a pleasant memory of the past in the days when things were better with the Pargeters than they were now.

There are families which seem predestined to misfortune—or rather which once having fallen upon evil times seem unable to retrieve their ill-luck, and breast one wave towards the shore only to be hurled back into deep water by another. So it was with the Pargeters. In spite of the daughter's heroic efforts and her father's brave endeavors to struggle against ill-health, they found themselves once more face to face with disaster. Coming home one stormy night from her work, and walking to save the bus fare, Susan caught a terrible cold. It turned to rheumatic fever, and for weeks she lay ill. The breadwinner could win no bread, and then the unhappy father and mother had to pawn what few things they had left from the wreck to pay their rent and meet the doctor's bill.

The poor little London dressmaker, lying weak and helpless, had to endure the torture of knowing that her illness was ruin to her dear ones. The worry and anxiety retarded her recovery. It was ruin that was staring the unfortunate family in the face. In desperate straits Mrs. Pargeter went down to her native place, and succeeded in borrowing a little money from an acquaintance of her girlhood. But it was a loan and would have to be repaid. It was only a fresh burden of debt.



Still it saved them for the time being—that is to say, it prevented them from being turned into the street.

Directly she was convalescent, long before she was well and strong enough to work, Susan Pargeter made a desperate effort to take up the battle of life again. But the trial was unsuccessful. The lady to whose house she went saw that she was ill, and told her kindly to go home again as quickly as possible.

Susan went out with a heavy heart, but it was a beautiful spring day and the soft air and bright sunshine revived her.

The house to which she had gone to work was at Bayswater. She walked along slowly until she got to the Marble Arch, then she went into the Park and sat down on one of the seats to rest—to rest her weak little body, but, alas! not her mind.

She was going back to a home where money was so badly needed with the knowledge that it would be perhaps some weeks yet before she would be able to do anything for herself or her father and mother.

And sitting there absorbed in melancholy thought, the young girl's mind wandered back to the days of her childhood, back to the days when the home was so bright and happy, and when Jim—dear old Jim—was with them to share her childish joys, to comfort her in her childish sorrows.

With a deep sigh she rose to resume her journey towards home. Something—perhaps the fresh, strong air, perhaps the exertion of the walk—had made her feel slightly giddy. She got as far as the Marble Arch and was crossing towards Edgware Road when she felt her head begin to swim, and her limbs gave way under her.

A wild cry just reached her ears as she staggered and fell, almost under the feet of a pair of spirited horses attached to an elegant landau.

The coachman just managed to pull up, but one of the



horses struck the girl on the head with his hoof, causing the blood to flow. The crowd rushed round, and a lady who was in the landau got out and insisted upon the poor girl being placed in the carriage.

"I will take her to a doctor at once," she said, and the girl was lifted senseless into the carriage.

. . . . .

For twenty-four hours Susan Pargeter was only partially conscious. She only knew that she was somewhere, and that people were gently moving round her.

When at last she came to herself, a dim remembrance of all that occurred slowly formed itself in her brain.

She opened her eyes and saw a white-haired old gentleman by her bedside.

"That's right," he said, looking at her over the rims of his gold spectacles. "How do you feel now, my dear?"

"I—I don't know," murmured the girl, still hardly realizing the situation. Then she added softly, "who are you, sir?"

"I'm the doctor, my dear. You've had a little accident, and you've been brought here, but you'll soon be all right. You'll soon be all right."

"Yes," said the girl, "I remember now. I must have fainted, but," looking round the room, "I—I—where am I—where have they brought me to?"

"To the house of the lady whose horses were so nearly over you, my dear. The kind creature insists on keeping you till you are well, and we're going to make a thorough cure, I can tell you. There now, don't talk any more to me. I'll send the lady to you."

"Who is the lady, sir?"

"Well, my dear, it's an odd name to mention to an invalid. Perhaps with that name in your head you'll think you're dreaming still, but her name is Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy."

"What?" cried the girl, trying to sit up in bed, but



falling back upon the pillow. "Why that's Jim Crowe's sister."

"H'm!" said the doctor to himself, "still wandering a little evidently. Jim Crowe's sister. What an odd idea. I'll fetch the lady to her at once, and come in again in the evening, and see if she's a little more rational."

And the doctor went softly out of the room, and down the stairs, to tell Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy that the patient had spoken, and she might see her for a few minutes.

And when Susan Pargeter opened her eyes again she uttered a wild little cry, and put her weak arms up, and flung them round the neck of the lady who stood beside her, crying "Jim, dear Jim!" and then for a moment there was nothing heard but the sobs of two loving women, united after long years of parting.

It was Jim Crowe herself who was standing by the bedside of the little London dressmaker, who had been nearly run over in the streets.

At first Susan thought that it must be all a dream, that it was one of those strange visions that used to come to her sometimes when she lay ill with the fever. But she opened her eyes again, and there was Jim's face still pressed close to hers.

"Oh, Jim, dear, what does it all mean—what does it all mean?"

"Hush, dear, the doctor says you aren't to talk yet, but to be kept perfectly quiet. When you are a little stronger I will tell you all about it."

Suddenly Susan remembered that she was not at home. "Jim," she cried, "how long have I been here? Poor father and mother, what will they think? Oh, let someone go to them at once and tell them where I am."

"It's all done long ago, dear," answered Jim. "We found a letter in your pocket, and we took the address from the envelope, and sent at once. Your mother has



been here and is coming again. She has only gone home to tell your father you are all right, and to ease his mind."

"Oh Jim, it seems so wonderful to see you. I thought we should never meet again."

"Hush, dear ; lie still for a little while. I'm going to be your nurse, and nurses mustn't let their patients talk too much till they are strong, you know."

Jim moved across the room and rang the bell. An Indian woman came softly into the room, and Jim gave her some whispered instructions. Then she returned, and sitting by the bedside, took the little wasted hand of her patient in hers and held it gently.

"Jim," said the girl, "do you remember the song you used to sing to me when I was a tiny girl, and you wanted me to go to sleep? Sing it to me now, Jim ; sing it to me now."

Jim looked at the white pained face that lay upon the pillow, and the tears came into her eyes and into her throat. She read the story of years of suffering and sorrow easily enough. It was written in the work girl's haggard face.

For a moment her voice trembled and was husky; but gradually she conquered her emotion and sang the soft lullaby of old.

It was years since she had sung it, but sitting once again by the little mistress that used to be, the old familiar words came back. The sick girl lay and listened with closed eyes, and a blessed, dreamy pleasure stole over her. All the years of sorrow floated away on the wings of the melody of the happy long ago.

After singing softly Jim watched her lovingly until the heaving of her bosom became more regular, and the little work-girl fell into a gentle sleep.

Then she rose, and leaning over, smoothed the brown hair back from the brow and pressed her lips softly upon



the fevered forehead. "Thank God, my lamb, my little Susan, I have found you again," she said. "Oh, what you must have suffered, what you must have suffered."

The Indian woman took Jim's place for a little while that evening while Jim went downstairs to dinner. But she wasn't Jim any more as she sat at the head of the table, and Indian servants went and came bowing low before her.

There were four other people at the table. A very dark, handsome young fellow of about 18, with coal black eyes, and three beautiful girls about as dark as himself. Beautiful brunettes we would call them, but their darkness was inherited from their Parsee father.

The servants treated Jim with stately deference—the children, as she called them, treated her with loving consideration.

For Jim Crowe was Jim Crowe no longer.

She was Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy, widow of a Parsee merchant prince, and the boys and girls were her nephew and nieces—the children of her dead sister Annie.

It was not till Susan was strong and able to come downstairs that Jim told her story.

She told it one day when a nice, cozy little five o'clock tea party was gathered together in the beautiful room that was Jim's boudoir.

The party consisted of Jim, Mr. Pargeter, Mrs. Pargeter and Susan—Susan lying on the sofa, for she was not *quite* strong yet, and the sofa was wheeled up to the fire, and Jim sat at the little table and poured out the tea, and Mr. and Mrs. Pargeter sat in two wonderful Indian easy chairs.

No one else was admitted—not even "the children," as Jim still called them—because this was Susan's first day downstairs, and it was to be celebrated by a little family gathering.



“Just ourselves, dear,” said Jim, “just ourselves, dear, as we used to be, years ago, in the little house in Holloway.”

And so these old friends, parted so long, the master and mistress and the little mistress, and the faithful servant, met in the old familiar way.

The room was no longer a little suburban parlor ; it was a beautifully furnished apartment in a West End mansion, and Jim was no longer a general servant in her afternoon stuff frock, but, Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy, charmingly dressed as becomes a lady of wealth and position at five o'clock in the afternoon.

And Jim, though nothing would improve her kind heart and her sweet sympathetic nature, had benefited greatly by her altered position and different surroundings. She spoke in a more cultured way—her manners had acquired the polish of society, and the years she had been mistress of a large establishment had given her a certain dignity, which, as a general servant, she had naturally not cultivated.

Poor Mrs. Pargeter, although she had been to the house every day to see her daughter, was not quite at her ease in it yet. Do what she would, she couldn't accustom herself to the Indian servants, and she kept thinking of Jim's old stories, and expecting to see the door open and admit a tiger, an elephant, or a serpent.

Jim's story, told to her deeply interested little audience, was a short and simple one.

She had gone away heart-broken from them, to stay for a little while with some friends in her native village.

But she pined and fretted, and felt the necessity of getting to work again. The work of a general servant in a London house doesn't leave much time for brooding. If the family isn't a large one there's always plenty to be done. Every time a window is opened the air blows in a job for a tidy girl with a handy duster.



Jim came up to London again and soon got another place—this time not as a general servant, but as a housemaid in a small family. She had not been there very long when a letter from India which her sister had sent to her cousin, Mrs. Marsh, which was a kind of “permanent address” for the wandering servant girl.

“Another baby,” said Jim to herself as she opened the letter.

It was another baby; but, alas, this time things had not gone well with Jim’s sister. Her baby had only survived its birth a few hours, and she herself had been very ill. “I’ve had a narrow escape, my dear sister,” wrote the Parsee merchant’s wife, “and I have a foreboding that I shall never be well again. For some time past I have had grave fears about my health. My husband, who is very kind, has tried to reassure me, but I don’t believe I shall ever be well again. My dear sister, we have not seen each other for years. Fate has willed it so, but I have always thought of you and hoped that some day we should be re-united. It may not be now perhaps, but, my dear, I want you to make me a promise. It will ease my mind so much if you will.

“I am not afraid to die, though I should like to live a little longer, but what is making me most unhappy is the idea of leaving my children in this country with no Englishwoman near them—there is no one who would love them or watch over them. My dear husband is very good, but you know what I mean, dear—he is a man and has his business to think of, and has to take long journeys and be much from home.

“What I want you to promise me, dear sister, is that if I should die while my children are young that you will come out here and be with them, and love them for my sake. Do write me, dear, and say that you will. You cannot think how it would ease my mind—how it would save me many a sleepless night of anxiety, if you would



only send me one little line saying 'Yes.' I couldn't bear to think of my little ones being left in this far off country to strangers, but I could die happy knowing that when I am gone you will be their guardian and friend, and replace the mother they have lost."

Jim laid the letter down with tears in her eyes. She, too, had hoped that one day she should see her sister again, but this letter robbed her of that hope.

She knew, from her sister's previous letters, that she was not the woman to make a trouble of a shadow, or to indulge in these gloomy forebodings without a cause. Something in the letter made her think that her sister *knew* that she was dying.

She sat down and wrote a loving letter in reply.

She gave her promise. Yes, if anything happened to her sister—which God forbid—she would come out, and the children should be to her a sacred trust for all her life.

A month later Jim received a cable from India. Her sister was dead. A letter was to follow.

In due time the letter came—it was from the bereaved husband. He wrote with deep feeling of his great loss, and he told poor Jim that her promise to her sister had been her greatest comfort in her last moments.

Funds were forwarded for Jim's outfit and passage, and she was assured that she would be heartily welcomed by her little nephew and nieces, who had been enjoined by their mother to think of her as one who would love them for their mother's sake.

The husband concluded by saying that it was with his entire approval and concurrence the arrangement had been made, and it would be the study of his life to make the task of his dead wife's sister as pleasant a one as possible.

Jim, on the eve of leaving England, endeavored to find out what had become of the Pargeters, that she might say good-bye to them. She went to the last address and



found they had left. The people there could not tell her where they had gone.

She went to Holloway and made enquiries among the tradespeople and among the neighbors. She thought it possible that some of them might have seen something of the Pargeters, and be able to give her news of them. But everywhere she failed. Since the day they left the neighborhood nothing had been seen of the former tenants of Sudbury Villa.

And so she went out across the seas to the strange land she had told little Susan about, and found wealth and luxury awaiting her; servants to obey her slightest wish, and herself transformed from a London housemaid into the female head of a Parsee widower's establishment.

The children took to her directly—the poor little things had missed their mother terribly, and when their aunt came out they turned instinctively towards her.

Her sweet, sympathetic nature soon strengthened the bonds between them, and she had not been in India a year before the children looked upon her as a second mother and gave her the full, fresh love of their young innocent hearts.

And not only did she win the love of the children, but in time the widower began to say to himself that it would be a wise thing to make his sister-in-law's position an assured and permanent one.

He was a young man yet. He might want to marry again. It would be a cruel thing if he brought another woman into the household now—a cruel wrong to the children. A stranger would never be to them what their mother's sister was.

To them she was everything now. To have lost her would have been to them a grief almost as great as came to them when their mother was taken from them. But Jim's position in the home would have been intolerable had their father given them a stepmother to divide their



love and obedience with their aunt. All these things passed through the Parsee widower's mind, and at the same time he acknowledged to himself that he had a strong personal regard and affection for Jim herself.

When at last after three years of widowhood, he told Jim one day what was in his mind, she received the intimation very quietly, and asked for time to think it over.

She looked the situation fairly in the face. She, too, had had the dread that the widower might marry again—perhaps a native wife, and she was filled with vague uneasiness as to what would be the lot of her sister's children then. Her marriage with Mr. Jamsetjeebhoy would make no change in the household at any rate, nor would it wrong the little ones.

She came to a decision after carefully weighing every consideration, and her decision was to accept the widower's offer.

And so in due time she became his wife, and the children ceased to call her aunt, and called her mother; and a better mother children never had. She never regretted the decision she had come to. She loved and respected her husband, and when he died from the result of an illness caught in Singapore, she mourned him sincerely.

By his will she was left with a large fortune of her own, and the fortune bequeathed to the children was to be entirely in her hands and under her management until they came of age. Her power was absolute. Her husband, during their short married life, had learned that he could place the most perfect confidence in her.

After settling certain business matters in connection with the estate, Mrs. Jamsetjeebhoy decided that it would be better for the children that they should pass a few years in Europe; and so she came with them to England, and took a large house at the West End.

As soon as they had recovered from the fatigue of the



journey and were settled in their new home, Jim thought of her old friends, the Pargeters, and determined to make one more effort to find out what had become of them.

But before she could make any inquiries chance brought about the meeting.

Her horses one day were pulled suddenly up amidst the cries of the bystanders. On looking to see what was the matter she saw a young girl lying in the roadway injured. She had her placed in her carriage at once, and on the way to the doctors was struck by the girl's features. In searching the girl's pockets to find some clue to her identity in order that her friends might be communicated with, an envelope addressed to Miss Susan Pargeter was found.

And then Jim knew that it was no accidental resemblance, but that the poor London work-girl was her little mistress of long ago.

She drove her at once to her own home, sent for her own doctor, and then sent off a servant with a message to Mrs. Pargeter.

"And now you know all," said Jim, as she concluded her strange story, "and how I became Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy, and how it comes about that we are all here together, snug and cozy and happy."

The Pargeters' story the wealthy Indian widow only gathered by degrees. Mr. Pargeter, with pardonable pride, tried to conceal their terrible poverty from Jim. He knew his old servant's generous disposition, and he feared to impose upon her.

Mr. Pargeter's pride had been his stumbling-block. It is quite possible that had he been a little more inclined to let his own friends know of his troubles he might have had a helping hand held out to him on former occasions, but he was one of those who suffer and are silent.

Admirable dispositions are these—brave, noble, and much to be commended. Unfortunately, their silence



under suffering does them no good, while the people (often very unworthy people) who cry out directly they are within measurable distance of trouble, attract all the sympathy. It is with sympathy as it is with charity. It is most frequently extended to those who least deserve it. Sam Pargeter was a favorable specimen of that genteel poverty which even when reduced to starvation endeavors to keep its hunger a secret, lest anyone should imagine it was asking to be invited to dinner.

But Mrs. Pargeter had not the gift of reticence, and little by little she poured out her woes and the story of all the terrible trials and misfortunes the years which had brought wealth and position to Jim had brought to them.

It made Jim very unhappy to hear it. It seemed to her so cruel that while she had had all that wealth could give her, her kind old master and mistress, and her gentle, delicate little mistress, had been enduring all the horrors and humiliations that are the lot of the poor in a great city.

She thanked God that she had found them at last, and that it was in her power now to help the friends of her own friendless days.

She was not long before she had matured a scheme which would restore them to comfort and peace of mind without in any way humiliating them.

She was still Jim, the old servant, to them in one way, and she knew that Sam Pargeter was a proud man.

But when she came to him in a plaintive little way and told him what terrible trouble she had with her business details and her accounts, and how sorely she needed the assistance of someone she could trust to go into figures for her, she had little difficulty in persuading Mr. Pargeter to undertake a duty to which she explained a handsome salary was attached.

“I shall have to pay a stranger a much larger salary,” she said, “and I shall never feel comfortable with a stranger. I don’t like seeing strangers on business.



You can't think, Mr. Pargeter, what a weight it would be off my mind if you would only undertake it."

Mr. Pargeter, when it was put in this way, saw no reason to refuse the offer, and he became a kind of secretary and accountant to Mrs. God Save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy, at a salary of £500 a year, and the shadow was lifted from his life at last.

And Susan, Jim's little mistress. Ah, be sure that she was not forgotten. She was nursed back to health and strength with all a mother's loving care, and the long walks in the cruel weather and the long days of weary work were things of the past.

She and Jim spent happy days together, and the children grew to love her as a sister, and one of them grew to love her better than a sister in time, and that was the dark, handsome young gentleman. The dark, handsome young gentleman called Jim "mother," as did all her sister's children, and it was astonishing how much more he remained at home, and how little he cared for outdoor amusements when Miss Pargeter was his mother's guest.

And when Jim saw what was going to happen she was happier, she thought, than she had ever been in her life, for she knew that to her loving family another loving daughter would in time be added, and the old ties would grow stronger still.

Susan Pargeter is Susan Pargeter no longer. To-day she is a happy wife, and lives in her own beautiful house not very far from Jim, and she is one of an affectionate family circle, and the black ox treads upon her little foot no more.

She is happy in the love of her husband, happy, knowing that her dear father and mother will end their days in comfort, happy in the knowledge that she is surrounded with loving, sympathetic friends, and certainly not one of the *least* happy hours is that in which she and Mrs. God save the Queen Jamsetjeebhoy sit together



before the fire in Jim's boudoir and talk of the old days when she was "little Susan," and Mrs. God Save the Queen was her "dear old Jim," and Mr. and Mrs. Pargeter used to allude playfully to the great lady out in India as "Jim Crowe's sister."



## THE FORTUNES OF THE FEATHERWEIGHTS.

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THE Featherweight family came over with William the Conqueror, and are therefore gentle folks. All the people whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror are gentle folks, though gentleness was hardly one of the attributes of the invading Norman Duke's mixed mob of mercenaries.

The Featherweights are proud of their descent. Between the reign of William the First and that of Queen Victoria they had to do many strange things for a living, but they never forfeited their gentility. During the reign of Victoria some of them, so severe had the struggle for life become, had even to accept subordinate positions in the counting houses of London tradesmen, but they were still gentle folks.

In the year 1882, the head of the family, so far as the word family represents a number of individuals, united by ties of blood, living under one roof, was Franklyn D'Arcy Featherweight, aged five-and-twenty, clerk in the counting house of Messrs. Malachi Brothers, of Holborn, tailors. The firm of Malachi Brothers was famous for its thirteen-and-sixpenny trousers (as advertised), and Mr. Franklyn D'Arcy (he was very particular about his D'Arcy) Featherweight made out the bills for the ready-money customers who honored the firm with their patronage.

For this professional assistance to the renowned firm of retail clothiers he received the modest stipend of twenty shillings per week, a sum which was generally reduced



by a shilling or two made up of sixpenny fines for being five minutes late in the morning.

But even when he was making out bills for thirteen-and-sixpenny trousers—nay, even when, during a rush of business, he was compelled to show the trousers and expatiate upon their merits, the symmetry of the cut, and the chasteness of the pattern—Franklyn was still a gentleman.

A gentleman is born, not made, and Franklyn's father was Captain Featherweight, and his mamma had been a Miss D'Arcy, therefore Franklyn received gentle blood in his veins from both the author and the authoress of his being.

Franklyn attributed his present rather humble position in life to the fact of his father having deserted his mother and left her with the family on her hands, while he cruised about the Mediterranean in his own yacht, and attended the ambassadorial receptions of the principal capitals of Europe.

The malignant tongue of slander, which does not even respect the descendants of the thieves, pirates, adventurers, and general scum of the Continent, which enlisted under the Norman Duke's banner, hinted that Captain Featherweight was only an ex-captain of militia, and that, having run through a few thousands which he inherited from a distant relative, he became traveller to a continental firm of wine merchants, which accounted for his long absences in foreign parts, and the same tongue absolutely denied the existence of the yacht.

The reason of the separation between husband and wife was faithfully recorded in the annals of the police courts. The separation was a judicial one, and arose from a habit the captain had (possibly inherited from a Norman ancestor) of blacking his wife's eye, and using language to her which, in spite of his Norman origin, was unmistakably Saxon.



The children of the marriage—Franklyn, his brother Harold, and his sister Gladys—remained with the mother, and in various subsequent little encounters with their papa on family matters, always took her side.

The Captain asserted that his quarrels with his wife were caused by her mismanagement of the household, her reckless extravagance, and her playful habit of contracting liabilities with milliners and drapers, which were never revealed to him until Her Majesty made the communication on a document commencing “Victoria, by the grace of God.” He declared that she had brought him to bankruptcy by her extravagance, and that she aggravated him to violence by her tongue. He also asserted that if there had occasionally been a fight it had always been a free one, for whenever he remonstrated with the mother his sons took up chairs and banged him over the head with them, while his daughter went down on her knees and bit his calves.

If the Captain’s version was a correct one, it was easy to understand why he did not trouble his sons and daughter with many visits, or inquire too closely after their welfare. Sometimes, however, family matters required that father and sons should meet, and on those occasions an appointment was generally made by the Captain at the corner of the street. Even the publicity of these interviews did not always prevent a fresh outbreak of hostilities, for during one conference Franklyn knocked his paternal progenitor backwards into a wheel stall, and during another, which must have been even more animated, the two brothers took their father by the legs and shoulders and flung him bodily over the palings of Regent’s Park after the gates were locked, and left him on his back yelling for the police.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Captain at last broke off all communications with his family, resolutely refused to make any addition to their



income, and forebore to furnish them with his address on the Continent.

The brothers were both in employment. Harold, the second son, who was two and twenty, was a clerk in a solicitor's office, and Gladys, who was a handsome girl of eighteen, gave music lessons to shopkeepers' daughters at sixpence an hour, or as much more as she could get.

Mrs. Featherweight, née D'Arcy, was *grande dame du bout des ongles*, and so she did nothing except inspire confidence by the hauteur of her demeanor in the breasts of the confiding tradespeople whom she honored with the family patronage.

The Featherweights never stayed very long in one neighborhood. They became too well known. Aristocratic families are always a little exclusive, and so when such plebeian folks as furniture dealers, bakers, butchers, grocers, and cheesemongers became too familiar and took to knocking loudly at the door, ringing violently at the bell, and leaving offensive messages with the servant, the Featherweights moved. It is only fair to say that they generally spared the feelings of their landlord in not informing him that he was about to lose such high-class tenants, and out of consideration for the neighbor's feelings they also generally loaded their furniture on to a van and went off under cover of the darkness of the night.

Sometimes there were little difficulties in the way. A vulgar landlord would fail to see the exquisite delicacy of these secrets flittings, and would suddenly arrive with a coarse and vulgar-looking man, who would get in at the front door and take possession of the Featherweights' goods and chattels for rent.

Still the Featherweights, under all their varying fortunes, preserved that perfect composure which only comes of long descent. When one little home was broken up, they looked out for another in as opposite a direction as possible.



To take a house and furnish it on the united earnings of the family was not an easy matter, for the earnings only amounted as a rule to about £2 10s. per week, and out of this the young gentlemen required their luncheons, their cigars, and their fares to the City.

These are things that cannot be obtained on credit. In the matter of clothes they were all right. London is full of tailors, and if you can't pay one you can easily order a suit off another, especially if you have distinguished manners and your papa keeps his yacht, and is on the visiting list of ambassadors.

Having found a house, the property of a widow lady, who didn't employ agents, or solicitors, preferred, Mr. Franklyn would take it, giving as a reference his *relative* Harold Featherweight, Esq., of the firm of Tort, Travers, and Co., solicitors of Lincoln's Inn, and Harold Featherweight would write back upon the firm's paper and say that he had known Mr. Franklyn Featherweight for many years, that he was a gentleman of high standing in the City, and a most desirable tenant, &c.

The furnishing was the next difficulty, but though this took time it was generally accomplished at last. London tradespeople are very confiding, especially to people who haggle about price, and walk out of the shop and have to be brought back three or four times before they will give an order. This establishes confidence at once. When a young gentleman and an elderly lady of distinguished appearance keep on saying that they have only a limited sum to spend and that the prices are too high for them, and when they require a written estimate, and haggle for an hour about the amount of discount for cash *on completion of the order*, you hesitate to talk about references.

And when you have delivered all the furniture and present your bill, and first one little extra thing is wanted and then another *to complete the order*, you send them



in your eager desire *to* complete the order and get your money.

Of course there is trouble with tradespeople even when your arrangements are artistically carried out, but the County Court is slow and the process of recovering a debt is frequently as objectionable to the creditor as it is to the debtor.

Get your house furnished and decorated and you are all right. You can make acquaintances, receive your company, and you have inspired confidence in the local tradespeople, who would always rather give credit to the occupants of nicely furnished houses than do business for ready money.

But even in the most confiding neighborhood you sometimes require ready money for emergencies, and one fine day after they had occupied Acacia Villa, South Hampstead, for about three months, the Featherweights found themselves in absolute need of Capital.

They had made some very nice acquaintances, on the strength of pa's yacht and their distinguished manners. They gradually became on visiting terms with some of the well-to-do families, and, as they accepted hospitality, they returned it.

Franklyn and his brother went about among the young fellows, and got introduced to their sisters, and introduced them in turn to Gladys, who had now given up the music lessons and was understood to be coming into a couple of thousand a year when she was 21. "It was from my mother's side she inherits it," said Franklyn. "My mother was a D'Arcy, and the D'Arcys are a very wealthy family."

This statement was made to sundry people—among others to a young fellow, Tom Bannister, the only son of a wealthy widow lady residing in the neighborhood.

Tom was very much struck with Miss Gladys before he heard of her £2,000 a year. The brothers, who had



ascertained what his prospects were, took him home with them as often as they could, and were constantly leaving him alone with their pretty sister.

Now Mrs. Bannister was a shrewd old lady with eagle eyes behind her golden spectacles, and although she was a devout chapel-goer and subscribed liberally to missions to cannibals and other heathens she was naturally of a distrustful and suspicious disposition.

What she had seen of the Featherweights did not inspire her with confidence, and when she found her son was constantly in their society she gave him a broad hint that she didn't believe in them, and warned him against them.

Tom protested hotly that his mother was mistaken, but the words caused him serious alarm, as they came somewhat too late.

Led away by his romantic feelings, he had entered into a secret engagement with Miss Gladys, and had written her letters of a most affectionate description when she was ill.

These letters were conveyed by Franklyn, who was in the secret—no one else was to know it. Mrs. Featherweight had great ideas for her daughter, it was intimated, and Gladys, acting on her brother's advice, urged her lover on no account to let her mother know yet.

Tom thought it was delightful. The mystery, the danger of discovery, the letters smuggled into the house to his beloved, all gave a romantic spice to the affair, and lifted it out of the ordinary category of courtship.

It is quite possible the marriage might actually have taken place had not the family been in a hurry for ready money. It is fair to Franklyn and his brother to say that before they proceeded to turn their sister's sweetheart into the cash, they invited her to state her feelings candidly. Thus invited, the young lady confessed that she did not particularly care for Tom, and she agreed



with the family committee, which was held on the subject, that as soon as he discovered he had been deceived as to their position and her prospects, he was very likely to back out of it, and then a breach of promise case might seriously hamper their future operations upon society.

A bird in the hand was worth two in the bush, and ready money was imperatively necessary unless the Featherweights were to do another moonlight flit, and sacrifice the headway they had made in the neighborhood.

Directly the family were agreed, the *modus operandi* was simplicity itself. Gladys one day, with tears in her eyes, informed her lover that her mamma had found the correspondence and confiscated it, and that she was being treated so badly that she intended to run away.

Hardly had the young man recovered the shock of this statement, before Franklyn took him by the arm one evening and asked him to lend him £50, and the day after Mr. Bannister received an anonymous letter begging him to beware of the Featherweights, as they were head-over-ears in debt, that they never paid their tradespeople, and that they were little better than swindlers. This letter was perhaps the most sublime effort of the Featherweight genius. It was almost unprecedented in its daring, for it was written by young Featherweight himself.

It had the effect that had been calculated upon. Young Bannister destroyed the letter lest his mother should get hold of it, and then sent a timid note to Miss Gladys informing her that, as things had turned out, and her mamma was so furious he felt that it would be wicked of him to bring further trouble upon her, and he resigned her hand and hoped she would be happy.

The receipt of the letter was acknowledged by the Brothers Featherweight in person. They called upon Mr. Bannister and requested a few minutes' private conversation with him. They then informed him that he



was a blackguard—that he had trifled with their sister's affections and severely compromised her, and, unless he fulfilled his promise, they would give him a sound thrashing first and commence an action for breach of promise against him afterwards.

Young Bannister turned pale and red by turns, shivered, perspired, stammered, and endeavored to justify himself. He was, however, too frightened of the brothers, who assumed the most threatening attitude, to hint at the information he had received in the anonymous letter.

Eventually, the Messrs. Featherweight, fearing they had frightened Mr. Bannister too much, and that he would offer to marry Gladys there and then to save his life, hinted that it was not their desire to force any man into their honorable family who did not wish to enter it, and they said that as the matter had obtained no publicity they would induce their mother to compromise it.

They hinted at a thousand pounds, but Mr. Bannister declared that while his mother lived it was impossible that he could obtain so much money. Eventually, they agreed to return him all his letters and allow the engagement to be cancelled for five hundred pounds, and this Mr. Bannister managed at last to obtain on the strength of his expectations at his mother's death by paying "a gentlemen in the city" an extravagant annual interest for the advance.

Out of the £500 the Featherweights paid away about £100 in settlement of pressing claims, and they honorably placed the other £400 to a joint account to provide the sinews of war for further family operations.

Soon afterwards they moved into another neighborhood, thinking it advisable, as some of the local tradespeople had already begun to talk of the difficulty they had to get their money, and this is the sort of gossip servants carry from house to house.



With £400 ready money at their command they naturally felt that they should be above suspicion.

That £400 was the stepping stone to better things. They had little difficulties for a time. Some of their old creditors turned up at their new house, and Franklyn very nearly killed a too-importunate butcher by throwing him down the front steps into the road just as a Pickford's van was passing. The Captain, too, created a little unpleasantness by turning up in the middle of a small and early, in a state slightly removed from sobriety, and having three rounds with his eldest son, and an interchange of civilities with his wife before he could be got sufficiently near to the front window to be thrown out into the area below.

But these were trifling drawbacks to the improved state of affairs. Franklyn, who was really a clever fellow, had got a berth in the City which was worth £200 a year.

Harold had accidentally discovered a little matter which his employers were desirous should not be known to anyone, and this secured him also a considerable increase of salary, and Gladys—sweet little Gladys—had succeeded in captivating another heart, this time that of a young fellow of property, who was weak on the lungs and addicted to brandy. This time there was no need to realize at a sacrifice, and so the wedding took place, and two years afterwards Gladys was a young and lovely widow, with a beautiful place in the country and £10,000 a year to keep it up with.

The Featherweights were always a united family. Gladys having done so well for herself, thought of her kindred. She had her dear mamma to live with her, and her brothers were always welcome.

They did not talk about the Captain now, or his yacht, or his acquaintance with ambassadors. They allowed him—that is to say, Gladys did—£100 a year to keep out of the way. The brothers now found it more to their



advantage to play a trump card in "My sister, Mrs. Kitson, of Kitson Hall."

Kitson Hall was open house to them. Frank Kitson, the proprietor of the Hall and their sister, was an invalid after the first year, and only wanted Gladys to come and sit with him now and then in between the bottles of brandy. The Featherweight family did all the honors and invited their own friends. They rode his horses, used his carriages, bullied his servants, and eventually took up their residence there, "in order to look after things for their sister."

After Frank Kitson died they were not at the Hall so much. The brothers had got out of it nearly all they wanted. Franklyn married a young lady he met there, who, it is needless to say, had plenty of money; and Harold, having carefully treasured his employers' secret, and at the same time studied hard, was admitted to a partnership in the firm on the day he became a full-fledged solicitor. He had no need to make Kitson Hall his hunting-ground for a wife, as he married his senior partner's daughter. The old man gave his consent all the more readily, as he felt that there are some secrets which are best kept in the family.

The Featherweights are now rich and prosperous (with the exception of the Captain who has been through the Bankruptcy Court, and is still allowed a small sum annually to remain cruising around the Embassies of Europe in his yacht), and nothing annoys them so much as for anyone to suppose that they are the same Featherweights who once lived on their wits in certain suburban neighborhoods.

They will tell you, if you refer to the subject, that there were, they believe, some people of that name who brought disgrace upon it, but they are absolutely in no way related to their branch of the family. The most annoying thing that ever happened to Franklyn D'Arcy Featherweight,



Esq., now J.P., was when an elderly gentleman named Malachi, who retired on a fortune made out of cheap trousers, met him at a ball at the Mansion House, and was under the absurd impression that he recognized in the J.P. a former clerk of his.

I have given but a short sketch of the fortunes of the Featherweights, because life is short and space is limited, but there is in their family history sufficient material for a three-volume novel. Short as the sketch is, it ought, I feel convinced, to conclude with a moral, but, though I have given the subject the most anxious thought, I cannot for the life of me find one.

Perhaps as an apology for a moral I may draw attention to the fact that, amid all their plotting, planning, scheming, and trickery, they never once forgot that they were gentle people. Even when they borrowed a few shillings from their new servant, and when they dismissed her for giving them notice, and stopped the whole of the wages due to her for breakages, they remembered that their mother was a D'Arcy, and that their ancestors on the male side came over with the Conqueror.

Perhaps had they been more humble, and paid their way and scorned to tell an untruth they would still have been as hard up as they were when I first commenced the story of their "Fortunes."

But pray don't accept this as the moral of their story, or I shall have the West End Tradesmen's Protection Association demanding my instant execution.

If you fancy that the Fortunes of the Featherweights is an overcolored picture of a certain phase of modern life, it is to the aforesaid society I would humbly refer you. Their archives contain hundreds of Family Histories which put mine utterly in the shade.



## THE LAST LETTER.

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“GOOD-NIGHT, Jack, old fellow, God bless you! When shall I see you again?”

“Soon, Will, I hope; you’re the only friend I have to tell my troubles to.”

“Poor old Jack, you can’t think how sorry I am for you. What a wretched day it was for you when that woman came across your path.”

“Aye, Will, it was. I sometimes think that it will end in a tragedy. She maddens me beyond all endurance.”

“Hush, hush, old fellow, you mustn’t talk like that. Why, I shall be uneasy about that revolver, now.”

“Oh, it’s only my wild way of talking. I’m not likely to murder her—she isn’t worth it. Good-night, we must meet again soon, for I shall want your advice. I expect it will come to a separation.”

The two friends, Jack Hallewell and Will Darlington, parted. They were both young men, Hallewell was about thirty-three, and Darlington two and thirty. Darlington had just purchased a revolver for his friend, being in the business, and had handed it to him with many instructions not to leave it about. Jack Hallewell explained that his neighbors had been visited by burglars, and that he had made up his mind to have a weapon, in case he should be similarly favored.

That meeting was destined to be an eventful one. Jack Hallewell went home to his wife, and before the week was out she was a dead woman, and he was in custody



charged with having shot her with the very revolver his friend had purchased for him.

Jack Hallewell, five years previously, had made an unfortunate marriage. A young builder, in a good way of business, he had met a young lady who was bookkeeper at the hotel in the country at which he stopped while superintending the rebuilding of a gentleman's mansion in the neighborhood.

Julia Travers was a young woman of good education and handsome appearance. Tall, elegant, lady-like, and with charming manners, she had many admirers, but when young Hallewell came upon the scene and allowed her to see that he had fallen desperately in love with her, she sent them all to the right about, and devoted herself solely to his capture.

He had no father and mother to consult, no one to advise him except his bosom friend, Will Darlington ; and a man does not consult a male friend generally in affairs of the heart.

And so it came about that Jack Hallewell married the handsome bookkeeper, and took her home to a newly-furnished villa at Stoke Newington, as his wife.

It was not very long before he discovered that in the great marriage lottery he had not drawn a prize. Julia Hallewell was vain and heartless—she knew that her husband was a successful tradesman, and making money, and that was all she wanted. She speedily allowed him to discover that her idea of wifedom had nothing to do with loving companionship and gentle sympathy.

Hallewell was deeply sensitive ; and, like all sensitive men, very quick-tempered. The result was that fierce quarrels soon arose between the ill-assorted couple, and they lived a life of almost open hostility.

Julia was too clever to leave her rich husband, or to do anything which would justify a separation. But in spite of her carefulness, Jack soon began to have an idea that she was



cold and cruel to him, because she loved someone else. He found out that at the time he met her she was receiving a good deal of attention from a young fellow in the neighborhood, who used the hotel—a Mr. Richard Trewavas.

Richard Trewavas was a handsome young countryman of five-and-twenty, and it was common gossip that he and the pretty bookkeeper were “walking out together,” and were likely to make a match of it, always supposing that courtship was, as the French say, “*pour le bon motif*.” But Richard Trewavas was thrown over with the rest for Jack Hallewell, and it was only some six months after his marriage that Jack found out that Trewavas had been Julia Travers’s accredited lover.

This discovery did not tend to improve matters, and the pangs of jealousy were added to the many tortures which the young husband endured in consequence of his wife’s unsatisfactory conduct.

The only confidant of his troubles was his old friend, Will Darlington. Will always advised him to bear his wrongs patiently, and to endeavor to win his wife’s love by gentleness and forbearance. He did try, but it was all in vain. Julia declared that she had married in haste, and that she was quite as unhappy as her husband. She accused him of being exacting, ill-tempered, and mean, and this was the state of affairs when the purchase of the revolver, in consequence of a burglar scare at Stoke Newington, brought about the tragedy.

One night Jack Hallewell returned home about eleven o’clock. Mrs. Hallewell had not gone to bed, and the supper was still on the table. The servant who attended to her master heard them quarrelling fiercely, and in her presence Hallewell in a fit of passion told his wife that some day if she wasn’t careful with her tongue he should “do” for her. That night the unhappy couple went to bed about midnight, and the servant heard one of them lock the door.



The next morning, on taking up the hot water, she heard a curious sound as of someone groaning. Getting no answer to her knocking and her repeated inquiries as to what was the matter, she became alarmed, and ran in next door for assistance. The gentleman next door came back with her, and not liking the appearance of things, went for a policeman, who assisted him to burst the door open.

On entering the room they found Mrs. Hallewell dead on the bed, which was saturated with blood, and her husband lying beside her, also bleeding and unconscious.

On the bed, close to Hallewell's hand, lay the revolver, two barrels of which had been discharged.

Medical assistance was at once secured. The doctor declared Mrs. Halliwell to be quite dead, but ascertained that the husband was not mortally wounded. As soon as possible he was removed to another room, and a thorough police examination of the premises and the scene of the tragedy was at once made.

"Supposed murder of a wife" was the newspaper report of the affair, the paucity of detail being explained by the statement that "the police were very reticent on the matter." As a matter of fact the police knew very little. The medical expert was convinced that the woman's mortal wound was not self-inflicted, but that the man's wound was, and as soon as it was considered safe to move him, John Hallewell was arrested and conveyed to prison on a charge of wilfully murdering his wife.

Will Darlington was horrified when he received the first intimation of what had happened through the newspapers.

"My God!" he cried; "the revolver I bought him. Poor Jack—Poor Jack!"

Darlington took his friend's case up at once. He didn't know what he hoped to do. The facts were damning, and he himself had not the slightest doubt that in a moment



of mad passion his unhappy friend had shot his wife, and then attempted to destroy himself.

“So this is the end of that accursed marriage!” he said to himself, as he sat down to think his plans out. “Poor Jack, what he must have suffered before he went mad and did this dreadful thing.”

Mad! Yes, that was the one chance. Every effort must be made to prove that Jack’s reason had been affected by the mental torture his wife had inflicted upon him.

Darlington was not allowed to see the accused man, who was still suffering from the effects of his wound ; but he ascertained who was the solicitor who had the defence in hand, and went to see him at once. From the solicitor he ascertained all that there was to know.

Jack Hallewell had made a statement, in which he persisted that all he knew of the affair was this :

On the night of the 22nd of February he went to bed about midnight. His wife locked the door, as was the usual custom. There had been a quarrel, he admitted, downstairs, but after they got upstairs it was not renewed. His wife was silent and sullen, and neither of them spoke.

He fell asleep, and knew nothing more until a noise awoke him, followed by a sharp pain. He started up, and felt the pistol in his hand. He thought he heard his wife utter an exclamation, and he was under the impression that the second barrel of the pistol was discharged while the weapon was in his hand, but he fainted and remained unconscious from his wound until he was found later on and the door was burst open.

The accused man could not fix the time, but he thought it was just getting light. This tallied with the servant’s evidence, who said she fancied she heard a couple of noises, one directly after the other, about seven in the morning. She slept right at the top of the house, and though the sounds woke her out of her sleep she did not



fancy that it was a pistol or that it was in the house. Some building was going on in the neighborhood and the striking of the hammers on the ironwork occasionally woke her at seven, which was the time the men commenced. It was considered by the police most probable that the noises the girl heard were the two pistol reports.

This was all that the solicitor for the defence had to tell Darlington, except that every effort was being made to prove that it was no wilful or deliberate murder; but in the absence of any witnesses to the occurrence and with the fact that the revolver had only recently been purchased and that the husband had on the previous night threatened his wife in the presence of the servant, this was likely to be a very difficult matter.

The police to whom Darlington went were polite to him, and gave him all the information they could as to documents, etc., that had been found in the house, but they maintained that there was absolutely nothing which threw any light on the crime. They had carefully examined the wife's papers and found nothing except a few paid and unpaid bills and a little memorandum book. The book was recently purchased evidently, and it contained no memoranda of importance. In fact there were only two entries in it; one was the address of a hairdresser in London, and the other was an address abroad, being simply—

“Fonda de la Paz (Hotel de la Paix),  
Monte Video.”

“What the deuce did she want with an address in Monte Video?” exclaimed Darlington.

“Can't say,” replied the Inspector, to whom Darlington had gone for information. “Perhaps she's had some friends who'd gone out there.”

The time passed on and Jack Hallewell was sufficiently recovered to be placed upon his trial. He pleaded “not



guilty," and the witnesses for the prosecution were called. The case for the police was damning, even poor Darlington, an unwilling witness, having to admit that he supplied the prisoner with a revolver at his own request a week previously, and that the revolver found on the scene of the murder was the same. The servant deposed to the unhappy life her master and mistress lead, though she tried good-naturedly to make out that the fault was mostly the "missus's." Unfortunately, too, evidence was forthcoming to show that Hallewell was jealous of his wife, and that he had latterly accused her of thinking more of a former lover than of himself. This gentleman's name came out at the trial. It was Richard Trewavas. For Richard Trewavas the police had made inquiries in case he might be able to throw any light upon the affair, but all they could ascertain was that a month previously he had left England for South America. The counsel for the defence made a point of this evidence when it came to the question of motive. A husband, he argued, was hardly likely to kill his wife because he was jealous of a man in South America.

Will Darlington made a mental note of this South American business. He remembered the address, "Fonda de la Paz, Monte Video," which had been found in the dead woman's memorandum book, and he made up his mind that this was the address of Richard Trewavas, and that Julia Hallewell had been in correspondence with him in England, and had obtained his address from him in order that she might write to him abroad.

The medical evidence was dead against the prisoner. The shot which had killed Mrs. Hallewell the experts said could not have been fired by herself. The pistol was undoubtedly in her husband's hand at the time she was killed. As to its being an accident, as the counsel for the defence ingeniously tried to make out, that was difficult to believe. Supposing that John Hallewell, keeping his revolver



under his pillow, which he said he never did, had got hold of it in his sleep, and discharged it, he might have killed his wife, but he couldn't very well have shot himself by accident at the same time ; and indeed, in the statement made by the prisoner, he himself declared that he didn't know how he came to be shot.

In spite of the efforts of the counsel for his defence, who dwelt upon the danger of accepting purely circumstantial evidence, and the fact that the only witness of the deed was dead, and all the rest was mere conjecture, the jury found the prisoner guilty.

The prisoner on being asked if he had anything to say why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced upon him, looked sadly round the court until his eye rested upon Will Darlington, and then, speaking more to him than to the judge, said in a clear voice, "I am not guilty, my lord. I have no knowledge how the accident happened, for accident it must have been. I neither deliberately took that pistol in my hand nor deliberately discharged it. Had I intended to commit suicide, I should have shot myself in the mouth or in the head—not in the breast. That is all I have to say."

The speech, short as it was, especially the latter portion of it, made a profound impression in court. The manner was perhaps more impressive than the matter, and the prisoner's demeanor all through the trial had won him a great many friends.

The judge informed the prisoner that he had had a fair trial, etc. ; that a jury of his fellow-countrymen, etc., and uttered all the usual platitudes with which the ears of condemned prisoners are regaled, and then putting on the black cap, passed sentence of death.

Jack Hallewell received his sentence with his head bowed. Will Darlington, who had nerved himself to remain in court till the last, broke utterly down and sobbed. The condemned man looked up and caught his friend's



tearful eyes fixed upon him. As they led him from the dock Darlington pressed through the crowd and cried, "God bless you, Jack," and Hallewell answered him softly, "I'm innocent, Will, goodbye."

When Will Darlington got out of the court into the open air he felt like a man in a dream. Had he *really* been assisting at the condemnation to death of his old friend Jack Hallewell. He had to repeat it to himself again and again: "Jack is to be hanged, Jack is to be hanged," before he could realize in all its ghastly horror the terrible situation.

"And he is innocent," he cried to himself, as he dashed the tears from his eyes. "They were his last words to me, and as I believe in a God above I believe in the innocence of my friend."

Will Darlington was not the only person deeply affected by the condemnation of John Hallewell. The public press took the case up, and there being a dearth of news, made much of it and opened their columns to correspondence on the subject. It was generally felt that though the evidence circumstantially was undoubtedly in favor of the prisoner's guilt, yet after all it was wholly and purely circumstantial. The public responded to the appeal of the sentimentalists, and public meetings were held, and the Home Secretary was worried a good deal about the case, both in and out of Parliament.

Will Darlington was untiring in his efforts, and eventually the newspapers announced about two days before the day appointed for John Hallewell's execution that the capital sentence had been commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

The great mass of the public were satisfied with the decision. The sentimentalists were satisfied, because their great objection is to the death penalty, and Jack Hallewell, being a man who had killed his wife, and not a pretty and romantic young woman who had killed her



husband, his case was allowed to drop by all but a faithful few, chief among whom was Will.

The moment he knew that his friend's life was no longer in peril. Will determined to devote himself to obtaining every possible clue which might eventually lead to the establishment of Jack's innocence, for of that innocence he was assured.

He did not disguise from himself that he had a most difficult task. The only possible theory was an accident, and who was going to prove an accident when there were no eye-witnesses.

Darlington had obtained an interview with the condemned man, and had besought him to give him every detail.

"I can tell you nothing," said Hallewell, "except that I woke up in pain which must have been caused by the bullet wound, and the pistol was in my hand. It went off, I think, after I awoke—my finger must have been on the trigger, and I heard Julia utter a cry."

"But how did the pistol come in your hand—where did you put it when you went to bed that night Jack?"

"I never saw it that night, Will. After you gave it me I took it home and I put it in an empty drawer in the bedroom. I told my wife not to touch it as it was loaded."

"What do you want with a loaded pistol?" she asked. And I told her what I told you—that it was in case of burglars.

"I swear to you, Will, that from the night I took it from you and loaded it at home, and put it away, I never saw or touched that pistol until I woke up with it in my hand."

"Jack, what do you think yourself? For God's sake tell me, if you have any idea."

Jack Hallewell shrugged his shoulders. "It is difficult to form an idea," he said. "The whole affair seems like



a nightmare to me now. Only the prison walls assure me of its reality. But there is not one thing that I can see that is possible. If I didn't get out of bed in my sleep and take the pistol out of the drawer somebody must have got it and brought it to the bed, and as the door was locked that person could only have been Julia."

"You believe that she got the pistol to shoot herself?"

"Well, I woke up shot, so the chances are that she got it to shoot me. Unless she was alarmed at a noise, and got the pistol to put under the pillow, and in my sleep I caught hold of it, and shot myself, and in her struggling to take it away from me the second barrel went off and killed her. But it is all conjecture, Will, all mere conjecture. I shall end my days within the prison walls, and go to my grave an accepted murderer. God help me! don't let me think about it."

. . . . .

Will Darlington was in despair. What clue was there that he could follow—who could tell him anything? Suddenly the name of Richard Trewavas occurred to him. What did that address in the memorandum book of the murdered woman mean?

Should he find Richard Trewavas? And, if he did, what could Trewavas tell him? That he had been in correspondence with Julia Hallewell. Nothing he could say could throw any light upon the death-scene of that locked chamber. Still, if only to try and learn whether Trewavas and Julia had been in correspondence, Darlington would find him.

He had ascertained that he had left England a month before the murder, and that his destination was South America. Convinced that it was his address at Monte Video which Mrs. Hallewell had entered, he got his solicitors to write out to Monte Video and make inquiries for Julia Hallewell's former lover at the Fonda de la Paz,



They wrote to their agents in the town, and the answer received was that Mr. Richard Trewavas had not been there, but that there was a letter lying at the hotel for him which had been there for some time.

“A letter for him! Perhaps from Mrs. Hallewell herself—written before that fatal night,” said Will Darlington. “She had entered his address to write to him. I wonder if the letter is from her. If it is, it is the voice of the dead speaking to the living.”

The solicitor was not quite romantic enough to see it in that light, but he agreed that if the letter was from the lady it might throw some light on the affair, though why it should he could not say. Darlington, who was eager to know everything, agreed to be at the expense of the telegrams, and the agent was wired to examine the letter and say if it was a male or female handwriting, and to note the postmark.

The reply was that the letter was in a female hand—that the postmark was London, February 22d, and that the envelope bore on the back the monogram “J. H.”

“Julia Hallewell!” exclaimed Darlington, “and posted the day before the murder!”

The letter was lying there, and Richard Trewavas had never called to claim it. What would not Will Darlington give for it! How was it to be obtained? Darlington thought the matter over, and made inquiries about Trewavas. He had been heard from in the interim. He had altered his route, having obtained employment up the country, and was not going to Monte Video. He had forgotten, in all probability, the address he had given to Julia Hallewell.

Darlington was possessed with a mad idea to get that letter. He had a presentiment that it would help him in the difficult task he had undertaken. So strong was this presentiment that he determined to get the letter at all risks and hazards. His first visit was to the inspector who



had charge of the case, and with whom he had since become friendly.

“Help me to get that letter if you can,” he said, “for, as I am a living man, I believe it will tell us something about that fatal day that we none of us know. If she was writing to this man it was with a deliberate object. Suppose she was going to leave her husband and join him?”

“Well,” said the inspector, “that would prove nothing. Still, there may be something in the letter, and I should like to see it myself. We’ll do the next best thing—we’ll have a copy.”

The copy was obtained by the Monte Video police for their colleagues in London in this charming way :

A gentleman entered the hotel one day and went to the hotel letter rack, took the letter out, took it away, copied it, then sealed it up, and took it back again. “Pardon, madame,” he said to the manageress, “I have taken a letter by mistake.”

Then an exact copy was sent to the London police, and the inspector receiving it, sent for Darlington at once and read it to him.

It was a short letter, but very much to the purpose :

“DEAR DICK,—I am free. My husband, who has not been right in his head for a long time, committed suicide last night. Dick, I am free—free and rich—I shall have enough for both. Say the word and let me come out to you. I will write all particulars by next mail. I scribble this line to catch the mail, which I find leaves to-night. Ever yours,  
JULIA.”

The postmark on the envelope was February 22d. On the night of the 22d, or, rather, early on the morning of the 23d, the supposed murder took place. And yet, hours before her husband woke with that pistol in his hand, she was writing to her lover that he had committed suicide.



“My God!” cried Darlington, as the inspector finished the letter. “She knew what was going to happen—it was all arranged.”

“It looks like it,” said the inspector.

“Then—if that is so!” exclaimed Darlington, “it was she who took the pistol from the drawer that night—not her husband.”

“Well?”

“Well, don’t you see now how it fits in with my poor friend’s statement? This woman wanted to join her lover, who was poor. She wanted to be rich, and to be free, and she arranged that the husband she hated should commit suicide. I can see the whole thing now. She got that pistol early in the morning, while Jack, who is a heavy sleeper, was in a deep slumber. She put the pistol in his hand, and his finger on the trigger, intending him to shoot himself, in order that it might appear to be suicide. Then she would have leapt out of bed and alarmed the servant, and called the police. But she forgot that it was a six-chamber revolver.”

“She helped the sleeping man to shoot himself; but when he woke up with a start, another barrel went off, and she received her death wound.”

That was Darlington’s theory. From the moment he formed it he never gave the authorities a moment’s peace. The copy of the letter addressed to Trewavas was laid before the Home Secretary, who, having ascertained beyond doubt that it was genuine, made a fresh inquiry into the whole case, and eventually, fully satisfied that the wife had fallen a victim to her own plot for making her husband commit suicide, graciously recommended Her Majesty to grant him a free pardon, and communicated facts to the press which were a complete vindication of Jack Hallewell’s innocence.

Jack Hallewell owes his liberty to the untiring devotion of his friend, Will Darlington. He (Jack) is fully con-



vinced that his friend's theory is the correct one, for it fits in with all that he remembers of that awful awakening.

Mr. Richard Trewavas has not yet called at the Fonda de la Paz for his letter. He is probably still "up country," and has troubled his mind very little about the woman who was willing to murder her husband for his sake. Men do not always appreciate these sacrifices so much as the ladies would like them to. Still it is very fortunate that Julia Hallewell was anxious to keep his affection. Had she not been, she would not have written him the letter which proved that twelve hours before her husband shot her she had condemned him to death.

Moral: Never count your suicides before they have taken place. That is the moral for lady readers. The moral for gentlemen readers is this: Don't marry pretty bookkeepers at hotels unless you are thoroughly satisfied that they are quite off with all their old lovers, and then they will make good and faithful and loving wives.

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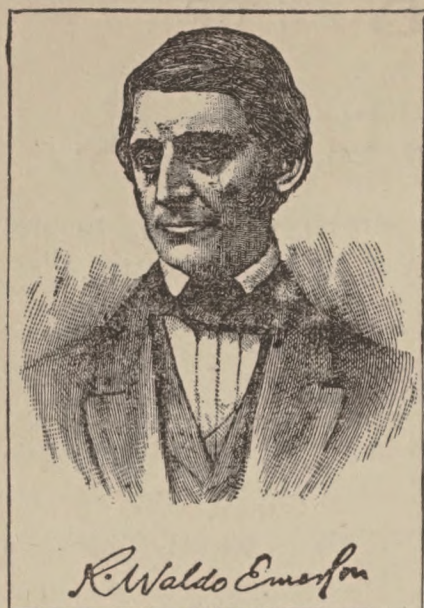
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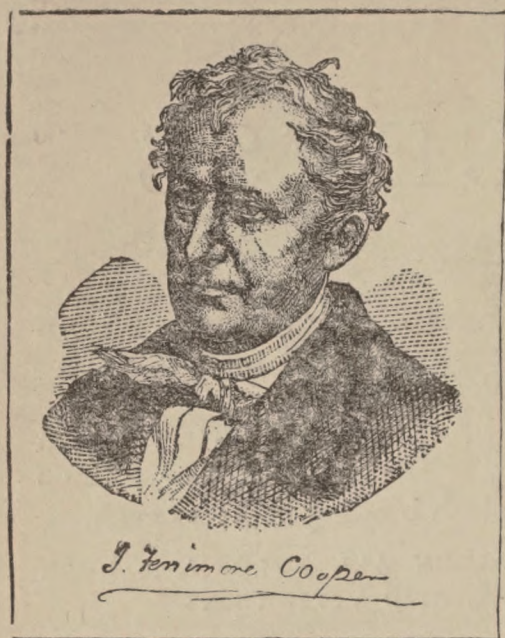
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